

Caput non impluviabile



fig. 1




pluvia

Editors **Amanda Raczkowski**
 Joseph Reed

Our father was a man about whom nothing was known. Nothing is known about him still. He gave us the recipes. He was not very interesting. A tree is more interesting. A suitcase is more interesting. A canned good is more interesting. When we sing the father hymn, we notice that he was not very interesting. The words of the hymn notice it. It is explicitly commented upon, in the text.

—Donald Barthelme, *Snow White*

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Josh Wallaert

Astronomical Science

from Noah Webster's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1828)

DAWN, v.i.

To glimmer obscurely.

ABBERATION, n.

A small apparent motion of the fixed stars, occasioned by the progressive motion of light and the earth's annual motion in its orbit. By this, they sometimes appear twenty seconds distant from their true situation.

NODE, n.

In astronomy, the point where the orbit of a planet intersects the ecliptic. These points are two, and that where a planet ascends northward above the plane of the ecliptic, is called the ascending node, or dragon's head; that where a planet descends to the south, is called the descending node, or dragon's tail. In poetry, the knot, intrigue or plot of a piece, or the principal difficulty.

LIGHTNING, n.

A sudden discharge of electricity from a cloud to the earth, or from the earth to a cloud, or from one cloud to another, that is, from a body positively charged to one negatively charged, producing a vivid flash of light, and usually a loud report, called thunder. Sometimes lightning is a mere instantaneous flash of light without thunder, as heat-lightning, lightning seen by reflection, the flash being beyond the limits of our horizon.

ARGUMENT, n.

An arch by which we seek another unknown arch, proportional to the first.

V o l u n t a r y M o t i o n

from Noah Webster's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1828)

ISSUE, n.

The act of passing or flowing out; a moving out of any inclosed place; egress; applied to water or other fluid, to smoke, to a body of men, &c. We say, an issue of water from a pipe, from a spring, or from a river; an issue of blood from a wound, of air from a bellows; an issue of people from a door or house.

VOLATILE, a.

Flying; passing through the air on wings, or by the buoyant force of the atmosphere.

CRINKLE, v.i.

To turn or wind; to bend; to wrinkle; to run in and out in little or short bends or turns; as, the lightning *crinkles*.

GALLOP, n.

The movement or pace of a quadruped, particularly of a horse, by springs, reaches or leaps. The animal lifts his fore feet nearly at the same time, and as these descend and are just ready to touch the ground, the hind feet are lifted at once. The gallop is the swiftest pace of a horse, but it is also a moderate pace, at the pleasure of a rider.

RUB, v.i.

To move or pass with difficulty; as, to rub through woods, as huntsmen; to rub through the world.

E a r t h l y D a n g e r s

from Noah Webster's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1828)

GAPE, v.i.

To open the mouth with a desire to injure or devour.

BLANKET, v.t.

To toss in a blanket by way of punishment; an ancient custom. The Emperor Otho used to sally forth in dark nights, and if he found a drunken man, he administered the discipline of the blanket.

CHOKES, v.i.

To have the wind-pipe stopped; as, cattle are apt to choke when eating potatoes.

RAINBAT, a.

Beaten or injured by the rain.

FIRE-BALL, n.

A meteor; a luminous globe darting through the atmosphere; also, a bag of canvas filled with gunpowder, sulphur, pitch, saltpeter, &c, to be thrown by the hand, or from mortars, to set fire to houses.

DISASTER, n.

A blast or stroke of an unfavorable planet.

S u m m o n s

from Noah Webster's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1828)

SIGNAL, n.

A sign that gives or is intended to give notice; or the notice given. Signals are used to communicate notice, information, orders and the like, to persons at a distance, and by any persons and for the purpose. A signal may be a motion of the hand, the raising of a flag, the firing of a gun, or any thing which, being understood by persons at a distance, may communicate notice. Signals are particularly useful in the navigation of fleets and in naval engagements. There are day-signals, which are usually made by the sails, by flags and pendants, or guns; night-signals, which are lanterns disposed in certain figures, or false fires, rockets, or the firing of guns; fog-signals, which are made by sounds, as firing of guns, beating of drums, ringing of bells, &c. There are signals of evolution, addressed to a whole fleet, to a division or to a squadron; signals of movements to particular ships; and signals of service, general or particular.

HOLLOA, exclam.

A word used in calling. Among seamen, it is the answer to one that hails, equivalent to, *I hear, and am ready*.

Danielle Wheeler

Star Arranging

There were seven in the group, marking the tent and marking the path and carrying plastic for the water. They wore vests and called out for blue rolls of paper with white dots. They packed lightly.

I was leading, off the trail. Tomorrow we will move to another part of the forest. I have been here for so long. I have the brambles hanging in the window, and grey pears set to harden in the sun, and a pack of old trees that follow me everywhere.

Also, I get hungry in the woods. I don't have a telescope, and miss much of the sky, and things were written on the ceiling of the cabin that I could not understand.

Ursa Major, Ursa Minor

I lived with the Bear. We have our own language. What some people call the wood, we call *for rest*. Is also called copse, like the word corpse, which means I am dead. I have been so tired lately.

All the chatter comes from my own brain. We braid the tails of fish and know what to do should we see a deer.

I am not trying to tell a story. The day is like any other.

Orion

And what we call river, he calls the *rill*. “A river of revelations” I found in the book.

A bandage from a black tin on the counter is all we have for the bear. It was my arrow, and it seems wrong that the man should have to hold the cotton over all the bloodied fur, apply the pressure, but in the cabin we become confused. I am the man.

It feels like a fox’s den, or a bat cave. The vulpine wail is my own hands and I scream as we apply the tourniquet but the bear never shows his teeth and is silent and he might be dead, anyways.

A b y K a u p a n g

t h e b o d y f a l c a t e

I

the body {the body outside
the baby} the skin with a button “lock”
refuses to eat swerves inward
by the slight
of exhibition

this is the baby stasis
soundless the baby
an abhorrence of lips waits
at the carousel waits

the body {the body mumbled
lock} abdomen falcate refuses to eat
startles at the motion divide

2

integration is action unperceivable
for the corpse at the site waits
a carousel waits near the cathedral empties

a warren of bodies {the carousel} eats
mouths at the waiting
 the rain {plummets} {pluits} the babies

the ones with locks mouth
all the cathedral won't button

3

the lock on the skin empties
a hallway the hallway ephemeral leads

nowhere daily an architect
removing the passage removes
the pluits the evacuees the exhibits

such integrate
the stoma the falcate coma

what a warren of babies {the body}
of static locks swerving inwards at the slight
of sidewalks and invitations
of carousal

4

the carousel refusing to eat
runs static soundless hauls the abhorrent
lips into a copse

that corpse {that one in the chamber}
integrates acts imperceptibly bows
the falcate rain

soundless
startled

the baby {that renaissance of carousel}

swerves inward
mouths at a pluit of locks

August is so subsumable

a result of interpolations the edge
of yucca razing queued

behind initiative endings and all
all around god
replays initiatives

blessed be the juncture

introductions hoop crew as
seedpod quiescence

such history
avant garde

before the hogback
then before seep then *grant it*
before generosity
the corporeal fraysing

into one measure of trailer
demarcated by ditches drytops

selah

the bone where bloom
posts for locative confidence

selah

**the failures of Thwife being
multitudinous**

1 the failures of Thwife being multitudinous

lending often the gully
a flight a lacked coin a falcate scar
the cliff rings in familiar lines

she's productive Anger
conflating and makes
Thusband a pretty
pain of knit and old

the lyric of presents' tragedy

2 ways that I hurt and all of the ways to

Henry,

the day's so gold and I'm
just unfit for doing the thing

Thusband is not how this went

2/18/07

3 21st c. mondegreens

Thwife: thief twice

Thusband: thousands of husband

Thouse: I will not die hair

4 you might like gypsy

some women heart houses
& they are all going out

of business she hearts mirage
she hearted hearts

so hostile now the camel
on the drive making happy
buying from above

and north that river those elms
th' always never
a sign her heads got nothin'

she hearts what she
chose him she
wants to be his house

Sara Levine

The Fainting Couch

Three Stories

I

As she had devoted the larger part of her life to that piece of furniture, they had grown accustomed to her there: not dead but eyes closed and wishing fervently that she might be. It was no longer necessary to toe it around her; you could laugh, whistle, fart, rip a sheet of paper from a spiral notebook. In the midst of this activity she would lie, eyes closed as if she were sleeping, a musty odor of melon surrounding her body like a moat.

“Have you grown accustomed to the look of me?” she would ask the child and his father. “Have you tired of me? Don’t you think I know what a burden I am to you? Don’t you think I have tired of myself?” She might go on like this for days until the desire to provoke them dissipated.

The child didn’t go near her unless asked to bring a blanket or a tray. On occasion, he peeled an orange for her and had perfected a technique whereby he rolled the orange between his palms to loosen the peel so that it came off in one large piece.

After he handed over the fruit, he studied the empty peel in his hand, thinking how the pores of the peel were not unlike the pores of a person's nose.

Sometimes when she got up to go the bathroom, the father and the child did a quick search and found the oranges uneaten under the cushions of the couch.

"Your poor mother," the father would say. "She just gets so tired, doing for you and me all the time. She has been on the fainting couch for fifteen years. Perhaps if she ate more citrus..."

On hearing this, the mother would open her eyes and grab the roots of her hair. With a gust of wind her scream would raise the couch into the air, where it wheeled around the room, grazing the ceiling and rattling the glass beads on the chandelier, and all the while she rode, her body stayed rigid and her eyes stayed open and her scream was so relentless and terrible she speckled the walls with her saliva. She always landed a few minutes later and was calmer.

The boy grew up to be a very nice person.

2

When I am dead, lay me down on a fainting couch. Pretend, briefly, that I have bent like a branch in the breath of bad news. Fetch smelling salts. (I will have them.) Fan my brow.

Sweetheart, I wouldn't dare pronounce judgment on you, and I hope you won't judge me. It frightens me that I might die in an unseemly position—with a grimace, on the toilet, in a posture that would embarrass us all. Promise to lay me down on the fainting couch, and I know I shall look dignified and peaceful. I shall look as I do when you come home from work and I'm down for a nap. What do you always say? Like your kitten!

When you have grown accustomed to the look of me there (dead on the fainting couch) call my mother. There will be a delay, even if she tells you she is dressed and will be right over. My death will creep into your heart and you will wait as she sweeps out the garage or removes the slick from the drain board. If you are out of your mind, just stand in the pod of the curtain and breathe. When at last she comes, open the door and take her arm. She loves that. Remove her coat and lead her to the fainting couch. Draw the shades, but do not leave her alone with me. She'll see the amethyst ring from Brazil and take it back.

If I am not wearing shoes, would you please put them on? Thank you.

I have a strong presentiment that I will die in the morning. I have a strong presentiment I will die and smell of lemons. It will be a weekday, I feel sure. Pick up the mail and deliver my

last letters to the fainting couch, and please see to it that I am not arrayed with any flyers from the electronics store. They keep sending them and sending them, because we bought a battery once. If you loved me, darling—*do* you love me, darling?—you will remember what for.

3

Outside the theatre a woman fell and turned her ankle. Her ankle turned like a key. In haste, in search of aid, her companion, a tall, bushy-bearded man, pushed his way through the crowd and knocked me over. My ankle turned like a key. As I fell I thought of the hand that had laid itself on my elbow, causing me to lose my equilibrium. It had been a long time since I had been touched. His hand, which gripped my elbow, had felt hot and therefore good. Not a caress, but a tactile experience. Then I found myself on the pavement, the ankle twisted below me in pain.

I have wanted to lie down in the middle of a crowd before, but there were no excuses.

A stretcher came for the woman who had fallen. Naturally, it came for her; she had fallen first. She talked the whole time they put her on the stretcher. "This is an indignity," she said.

“I’m sure I can walk. He’s over-reacting,” she said of her companion. “I could hump along if I had someone against whom I could lean.”

She said it like that: “against whom I could lean.” Just the kind of person who goes to the theatre, I thought.

As I waited for the stretcher to return, I entertained myself with other thoughts. But the stretcher did not return. The street grew empty, the sky grew dark. I had lost the feeling of the hand on my elbow, the hand that had been hot and good. At last, I got up.

I limped through the parking lot, which was empty, through the streets, which were dirty, and I came to a park where a man sat on a bench. Was he a strong man, I didn’t know, a good man, I couldn’t tell; a fat man, a sharp man, a blind man, a young man; judgments I did not make. I waited until I got right in front of him and then I swooned. I came down with a thundering noise because that’s how people faint, not like a feather, like a sack of potatoes tumbling off the larder shelf. When I came to the man was leaning over my face and taking my pulse or my wristwatch, it didn’t matter to me which.

Eric Baus

Gored Ox

A man with a lantern buried the tail of a gored ox in reddened wool. Both sands said this. Minus inscribed, *Bathed in salt, a new bus arrives*. A cold fit. Should wood be laced into the scene as an arm? Embers hot, he saw another fold of the vellum effect. Would his story sleet? Was the elemental udder set to speech? A latent colt, Iris interred the oration of a thorn. She saw inside the funerary soot. He was tainted to depict the birth of a thrush. He was an only arson, an anvil inside. Iris was cited in cloud position, as Ibis. Ibis, twice the size of a flock. An enemy of ices, her urn became a fish. Had Ibis's urn contained a clone? The story striated, swallowed an asp.

U r n e d B r a i d

If Minus writhes after a séance, mostly cloud, out in the unseen air, bees comb his hair. Night heat made his ink weave neon. His cells glowed negative noon. Did serum sprawl during the previous incubation of the ur-mane? Honed nils emerged. An orange tern. Born back to beetle gel, he slit the comma's hide.

Votive Scores

If eels lie vertically inside the statue or old bees coat his surface,
a needle will point to the center of his hide. Owls murmured up
a piece of green cloth. Hard ash topped me. The birds it en-
tailed peopled the treetops, stripped me of my coos. Un-tuned
doves flew elsewhere, worried their drones would shrink inside
my ears. A second split occurred when his eyes bloomed red.
Votive scores pushed open the view. Here, the street was both
omen and throat. The swarming sky sparrowed until day with-
ered, until the statue punched out of his skin. He was wearing
his own arms. His house showed. Ants formed and he scorched
their trails. Sing rendered, he trilled, Sing posed.

Paige H. Taggart

**I've Tried to Fortify Never-Ending
Bliss Inside a Capsule, to the Extent
That I Laid Down Any Rumors Met
Concern**

Buckled the vault closed and took-off for
inflated psychop when reason measures
character and the isolations
beam delivery. Gathered ligaments
in the firmament and ingested light;
beg back any remainder in beginning
day after greyhounds sniff out clues.

I seed this consideration into a ferry pitched
across the bay, lay concourse after concourse
into a clay podium that an oxygen man speaks
from. How to handle such intolerable matters
is difficult to link in the dark.

I hung the leopard in salt, then put him in an
ice chest, his temperature cooled quite

quickly and became thawed-out after.

Stars give us reason to aspire towards glory, oh but
the hand over the mouth is such an exaggerated
expression. The ferry bumps into the bay
and catches its nose on fire. A saw and a hammer
are the same weapon when they are parting principals
earnestly spoken to the leopard man.

I've no intention of dismantling your tail. But the clock
offers rewards for putting time first. When the oven timer
is set for the time I cooled out the insides, sheep will
have rolled over in a hill to become stuffable creatures.
Sure the measure it takes to fill the cup is always half-
empty, according to science. And my locales make
haste on the hills, scratching their tempers with the end
of their shepherd's cane.

D

Rhapsody. Mispronunciations. What is it about childhood that affects us. A plane homing in. The denunciation, the informant. Keep it close. The razzle dazzle. The dark authorial voice. Nose up. Arrow. Demolition, defrocked, demilitarized, Frankensteined. Lever up the shiny stuff past 10 o'clock. Entrance grants sanctity. *Duende*, demarcation. And the living doesn't portrait as well as you might think. D so close to the cusp. The confusion, the paradox. Devotion. The evidence against us. We fly our own way, though living has its possibilities. Desolitude. Desegregation of souls. Poor Pythagoras, except for your theorem, mostly lost. The antipathy, the feint. Appropriation of grief something natural here. I'm drawn to it like wings to light. Sharp percolations. Positive identification. Lifted windows like lifted skirts, the lock, stock, and barrel. The blessings are mixed. In bloom, call girls are asking you for paper to write it all down. We are forever writing with our bodies. I *can* make sense of it. Danger a mother lode. The grandiloquent, the dry eye, the seemings ripped, the fusion confused, the cheerful bruise, antagonism, desire...

All that negativity. D for prose. The letter I will never write. Eventually D knocks, we want nothing to do with it. The living are stuck with the living, dead to the dead. Now face the other. The evil wicks away (hardly at all). Bad fabric? D in the darkness D in the light. For words that begin with D in other languages. Where maybe D doesn't exist at all. Proto chango. Sediment, siding. The unilateral nature of anything, which is complete, utter denial. Blankets. Immeasurability that can be measured. Infinitely. Underestimation, priceless. The embitterment, pure power. Proximity on time. Lift off happened hours ago, minutes ago, now, futurity. The future full of maturity. Imminence. An image dismantled. Immense forgetfulness. We not that important and of the utmost, still proving our DNA. Prowling around. The idea to hold off. To aggress. Pursue. We've been underpinned, lifebloods of silence. We do not always choose the things we need to do. Alluvial, bright...

Yet bury me in time for dinner. Traditional measurements of time that I so desperately need. Don't get me wrong, I exist within the parameters. There are two ways at least this can go. You fill in the rest; it's a constant revision. The decisions we make, if we're lucky, are our own. It's an interesting conceit. The versus, the verisimilitude are remarkable. Enough is enough. No resurrection except in hushes, disbelief. Welcome to our

planet. Please buckle in. The iridescent flicker of wings. What season. Monarchs clinging. Our dues. No fleeing the outpost before too late.

I need the ghost word. Leaf prints in cement. Something there, weaving. And the bruising. The under sea level. Levees, pumps, dams. Who will we find above the gravestone, waiting. To survive is the only prerequisite, the final exam. I cannot complain. Not a matter of when, but how. How dapper. Delinquent. A small intimate concert at 8 p.m. Boisterous hummings coming clear. Compass points, libations, love sketched in pencil; it's emphatic! Clusters of photographs like strophes, bundlings of nerves, package deal. Is it erratic to write in one long perfect line so we feel all evening gown? Desire in fields, folds. The field notes say: each section of this is domestic, a magnet. A freezer full of good oaths, a bedtime story. Did you tell it? Did it find its lucky day?

R

Not a chance in flowering hell. Tambourines bashing near your head.
The arc. I understand little, but gaze in all directions like a fly.

I want the safe distance. We the tenuous, causing. Requiem the dying
language's language.

Brisk business. Billboards, each movement each utterance requiem,

every action counteraction prayers spinning overhead, contraction of
bodies,

longing, willing what must be willed, for which no answer, no belief.

A wave of the hand, passing of grief, the inexplicability,
the dead past us, feral. Prayer every act of grief an animal can make,

open ended and overtaxed. Drunken telephone calls. Early awakenings.
The diameter of grief no one really knows except....

The restoration. Final resting place wherever one falls, was felled. The
stripping.

Take this go swiftly, you already gone—)

what I hope can overtake you at the gate, requiem not something bound
by definition,

bread not bread, but bird. Careful of even your own letter. Restless,

water poured over stone. Lichen. Burly skies. Punctuation of war zones.
What correlation of language here? How deep the evangelical?

Faith an evolutionary trait? What worth preserving, what ritual?
What breeding grounds? What remembered in the collective memory?

What words do we return to? Not yet, love. We are still arriving.
Protect me if I'm late. The calls are deafening.

Sound of rain on leaves. The deep and the shallows.
Endemic is what I meant to say. Refractory, raucous.

The night light's on. Somewhere there is something unfriendly lurking
and no one can protect you. Animal down, nothing to do.

In unsteady terms, what will be washed away, what makes every effort to
stand,

what awareness of system. Where does it get us except here in the
constant engagement.

The steady, the not for sale, the been here before, the not dead yet, the
debris,
the roped off, the do not go there, the swim at your own risk, looms of
destruction,

the advocacy of pain, the constable of it. Consternation, affable wounds,
grass-backed will, necessary action of taking at some point,

the seizing of meaning, the inconstancy of it, the unetched superlatives,
superstitious codes, the hazy zone. The mirror image. Sleeper cell.

Liebestraum. It's nasty out there. Tusk a doodle doo. Embryos. The
painting of dust.

Drift. The making up as we go along, slow jazz tune. Nothing set in
stone.

Tell that to _____. The trappings. Bent knees. No vehicle. No motif.
Thick skin on ground. The layman's prayer. Faces torn.

Levitation of souls, the bringing them around. Leaving them go.

The invitation of it. The grim parts. Continued. Even if I knew the
truth, I wouldn't
tell you not to listen, wouldn't twist the radio dial south. Listen, you
should be livid.

The evidence weighs in favor. Trust the turn. Light is erotic and shadow

and autumnal sun. I wish so in a lawless land. Grief has a scorecard,
and it's picking us off. Leave it be, says the domino effect. But I don't
want the question

answered. I want the question answered in questions. I want relief. What
brilliant sleight
of hand will bring you and me to the ground? Where the final edition?
Finality is

banality. The end rhyme is right. Everyone knows the grit. Pitch. I carry
out the bags behind a line of people counting their cash on Friday.

Leavings happen.

Understatement, too. Smorgasbord, divinations. We are in a crux.
A cradle. The moon shines brightly over most of us. Caravan. Numbers
and notations.

Liaisons. Resonance, jewelings of drought. Flutter, genuine. Lockings
down.

Shane Jones

Beekeeper

One possibility is to attack with bees, I said. I could send thousands. The stings would force him to peel the clouds away.

I told this to Thaddeus while we sat in a balloon basket staring up at the sky. The actual balloon itself rippled around us on the snowy plains.

Go ahead and send them, he said with his eyes full of tears.

I tapped the side of my head and a swarm of bees moved up my neck until they formed a funnel extending skywards from my head. Then, only seconds later, the funnel collapsed and thousands of my dead bees filled the basket.

I knew this wouldn't work, said Thaddeus, shifting his legs out of the dead bee basket.

B l a c k s m i t h s

The blacksmiths had begun building a steel ship large enough to carry the population of the town. Thaddeus asked why build a ship and a blacksmith laughed while slamming two iron planks against a metal block.

What do you think is going to happen when all this snow melts? he said, spitting his cigarette into a pile of snow.

He then turned to a group of blacksmiths who were above him, working on what would become the front of the ship. Is it too ridiculous to think we can't all sail away on the rivers that will flood our town?

The blacksmiths all raised the glowing tips of the metal they were working on and shouted no.

Thaddeus nodded and began walking to where the beekeepers were standing on the hill. From this distance, he thought, it looks like plumes of smoke circling their hooded heads.

The Nightly Umbrella Effect

We sat up there on the hill and watched the flames from inside the balloons heat the fabric to neon hues that burned bright against the dark sky. The children played Prediction, pointing to blank sections of the sky and waiting. Sometimes all the balloons would light up at once, producing the nightly umbrella effect over the town beneath whose buildings were filling with the sadness of another oncoming February. Nights like this will soon die, I remember Selah whispering in my ear as I pointed over the shoulders of the children. As the days became cooler and the clouds thickened, we spent less time on the hill watching the balloons.

Nights like this will soon die, Bianca told me after walking from the woods where she had seen three children sitting against an oak tree, twisting the heads of owls.

Nights like this will soon die, shouted the butchers, marching down the hill where we sat for the last time to watch the balloons, the sound of shrieking pigs echoing into town, the moon catching their cleavers.

Nights like this will soon die, Selah whispered into my ear. She raised her hands to my eyes and the children all gathered around with their lanterns to watch the first snowfall of February gather into her palms.

Questions

Thaddeus walked into the woods and asked the children twisting the heads of owls if they had seen a small girl in a yellow dress. The three children were sitting against an oak tree with their legs stretched out, the snow stitched to their waists.

Did the yellow dress have flowers printed at the hem? asked the middle child.

Yes, said Thaddeus.

Did the little girl have dark hair that smelled of honey and smoke? asked the child to the left.

Thaddeus hesitated then nodded, trying to remember if during all those moments he held her in his arms if she smelled of honey and smoke.

Did the little girl have a drawing of kites on her hands and arms? said the child to the right.

Yes! said Thaddeus. Yes, yes, yes. They are kites her mother painted. When did you see her last? Was she with anyone? Is she safe?

The children went back to concentrating on twisting the heads of the owls. No, I'm afraid we haven't seen her, they said.

Now if you don't mind sir we are very busy and much enjoying ourselves by playing with these owls. I hope you find the little girl, she sounds very cute and very beautiful.

Chapel of Teeth

On Monday I learned about parasites that eat a fish's tongue and then pretend to be the tongue, lolling in the mouth cave and surviving on food bits. On Tuesday I began to wonder about my own tongue. There it was in its cold little chapel of teeth, lagging behind to salivate on some gumdrops. But I hate gumdrops, I informed my tongue. Where did you even get these gumdrops? And my tongue said, okay, fine, you got me. I've been sneaking out to buy myself gumdrops and write love letters on the butcher's dirty windshield. I've been buying lottery tickets in your unlucky numbers. I signed you up for some medical studies. On Wednesday it said, why don't you go get the gumdrops? I don't want to miss the lotto. On Thursday I borrowed a parasite index from the library to be sure the rest of me was really the rest of me. But the parasites come in all shapes, I learned, not only of the tongue but also other softer parts. My gut told me to stop worrying about it, but then I thought, shit, my gut is in on it too. I snuck out to the train station while the tongue was asleep. In Milwaukee I saw it on a bench, loitering next to a faceless man. We tried not to look at

each other—just earlier that day we had been intimates. The next day I sat in the dining car trying to read the news in the skirts of the prairie. Without a tongue, it was hard to say, “This pastoral array makes me feel kind of religious.” It was hard to say anything. But by then it was Friday night. It was time to have a good time.

M a n d e Z e c c a

S o n g

If we ward off a body held in cockle or grass.
Bower creased, the wakeful sit
beneath a window's green shadow. We are
massed, being so cobalt, hurling rocks
at a sky.

If a beard of words.
A man moves his saw-arm down.
Nothing stops waiting. We are many
threads woven into a house. The breath in it.
Nothing, when I tell it,
drums down over a cliff.

S o n g

Never ridden a horse. Never shot stones at birds
from a horse's back. Under the corn, the coffin bone.
The mirror opens. What is dug up. What flutters

out from the mouth. Nestled in a crater a dark bone-
shaped gap. Nothing rears back.

Such grain such sun in a door. A single digit.
A limb that was the horse. What weight is borne.

S o n g

The rut of the body has wheat in its weight.
I have cavernous mouths. Uncanny,
this tongue of ours. I have great bones
containing little, hateful wolves.

The hole in the fence has a sound, it is yellow.
The bullock asleep in foxgloves.
Its lolling mouth in a field.

What turns lost in the bleaching
is like galloping, what comes in is reined.
Because of the breath in it.
All these rust beds I open.

Katherine McCord

Muse Annie

There is a moment of recollection and she is gone. Fast. Faster. Fast. I hide her shoes. The brain comes back. The circle of death expands. And there are days.

How do you get to Catalina Island, Annie? I'm going to go look it up. I see this long bridge, my uncle riding by on a tuna boat. His ponytail flying. *Hey, you grew up*, he says. It's so bright the pavement disappears. Then the boat. He turns on a dime like a star. I fly, the backs of fish slipping from the nets we wrote. I'm a child again, Annie. The waves rock shells. I tell everyone I must go back.

Annie, I have to tell you about this dream. I was driving you home. It had something to do with my shoes, the glint of a web. The sky is a hurt in my hands, faint in the back of my throat, *on* my chest. I wake and the name of it all is Estancia.

All night I flew, turned somersaults. Annie, you shouted, "I'm with you! You're so high!" And then my limbs became soft, I grew an outer shell, rode *with* nothingness, landed on the fragrant yard, pushed off, the dresses of the dream billowing.

It's the red earth, Annie. I was in another country learning to walk, learning to run, learning to write my name. And they were running. I imagine the earth, there, as heated, moist like warm bread. And the silence of bare feet. The journalist's camera. Run, people, run, I tell them, as I learn to write my middle name. Anne. Ann. Anya. Able. Abe. Ask. Albeit. Age. Aesop. Andy. And. Abraham. Angel. Ale. Whale, I draw. Wail. This is what we call taking off. Astral bodies. Lucid dreaming. How to fail and fail. I give them wings and shoes, cupped in each hand. And then the babies stave off nothing. And we read ourselves to heaven and dream ourselves gone. Back to gather loved ones. And then gone. Raised. Razed.

Annie, when I'm finally ready to write I can only speak Japanese. But I don't understand what I speak. When my husband wakes me in the morning, I try to explain, but neither of us understand. Then I discover I don't have enough room, in my room. And that there isn't enough room outside. I can't see past the curve of the road. I can't see past each roof. But then I decide I must write and there isn't anything to write, besides I'll misspell everything because now I'm writing Japanese sounds in English. That's what I decide I must do since I don't know the symbols. But I have no space and I've already thrown everything out.

Then I'm shopping for something in an empty store. Slippers? And someone is buying me a surprise while I'm there. And I can't hear what I'm supposed to hear, even though I can see everything. That we spoke and there is an energy to speaking the truth or as close to the truth as you are able to speak. Last night I learned another language. I didn't learn to speak it to where I understood, but something had taken over me, and the people on the sidewalk in my dream nodded and nodded their heads. And I had one child with me, or I was look-ing for her, or I was looking for her shoes. Her shoes were a language that would bring her back. Her feet in her shoes. Not a car in a house. A foot in a shoe. And a yard with grass. Just back there, alive, somewhere.

I want to take off the ends of words, Annie. Say *groun* instead of *ground*, the foot caught, the slur, the stumble. I mean, how fabulous. Roots exposed. Lilacs deepening because of it. People leaning in to listen, quizzical, *What? What's wrong? With you?* Nothing, I'll say, finally, *nothing at all*. Later, steam escaping in ribbons through a manhole, a sheer curtain, a broad lamp, a backpack thrown to the floor.

Oh, Annie, Bangladesh and La Jolla. I want to row a boat between them, to the poorest country in the world. See the people there? When I go to sleep, I'll row past the whispering. And I'll wake inside a room, one man weeping, to tell me my

father planned it all. Silence slapping the boat. Silence at the scientist's window. Silence flying above the yard. Now the river, smooth, brown, clear. And I'll see my father loved. Left-handed. Now I won't see him, I'll see the sky.

Oh, Annie, everyone waves bright fans. Or kites! Maybe they are kites, the string wrapping a pole and my father putting something beneath us, the day I think, minus touch. We are thinking. The rush up. The fluttering diamonds and rags.

It isn't a dream. To be beautiful. Honking horns, my dad arriving to tell us everything's all right, my dad, arriving, in his suit, from his office, his job, so that when it crashes, a kind of breaking up really, he never arrives on the scene or walks away but it is his presence and I'm home with our girls waiting for some kind of conclusion to my life because without him I can't find my life or the beginning or end, like a plane crash in a dream where there is some kind of loss or being gone when someone was never there and the crash is symbolic. There's no fire or heat or screaming. Just the inside of a plane, a few tilted seats. No smell or sound, no running away, and then a flash like you've forgotten you're home.

Consider the Buzzard

As children, we learned to gauge the temper of the local weather by observing the various ornithological activities in the trees and air above our heads. A wedge of sky devoid of crows demanded caution of us as we traipsed around the neighborhood, a rosary of starlings perched along the power lines or the soft twitter of tumbling swifts in our chimney freed us from the confines of our home, sent us rushing to the abandoned factories to play among the tangles of razor-wire, and in the din of shrieking, crying birds southbound for caves outside the city, we knew to lock the shutters and huddle quietly in our rooms.

Of course, a number of species proved less than reliable to our skyward observations. Consider the buzzard: a narrow-minded, solitary bird flying high above the earth, eyes scanning the ground for carrion. Many times, we saw one suddenly twist in the air as if to correct for a disruptive gust of wind, only to disappear into a newborn thunderstorm, its evasive maneuvers come too late.

I cannot help but picture the vanishing buzzard when I think of my own inevitable end.

From the moment of my birth, a fierce and gusty event I've been told, my mother worked to shield me from the curse upon the males in our family. She forbade the midwife from performing the circumcision, and she purposefully barred the local seer from observing her labor, as if by hiding my gender and its writ of destiny from the outside world, she might save me from the desperate trajectory that had come to claim my father, his father, and every man since the beginnings of our troubled blood.

My sisters welcomed me as one of their own, a partner in sorority, and I grew to appreciate the intricacies of lace and velvet, the cautious shrug of costume jewelry. While the other boys at school wielded invisible bayonets and other implements of war, I became fond of the flexibility of certain dolls, the satisfying bounce and click of a quick game of jacks, and the cheerful symmetry of pink umbrellas and matching galoshes, which my sisters and I wore on the most rain-battened days.

The weather lumbered through the fuzzy background of our youth, occasionally leaping forward, taking our city hostage, pummeling us with volleys of snow, sleet, and the rare handful of toads or other small animals entombed in dirty blocks of ice. We often heard of storm-related fatalities, but the authorities presented these as the unfortunate but inevitable consequence of our large homeless population and the city's overtaxed shelters.

Our mother urged us to remain vigilant out of doors, despite the government's attempts to deny the severity of the situation. She taught us about the deception of low-lying fog, the creeping tendencies of mist, why open-air pavilions lacked enough protection from the weightier forces of nature. We heard in her voice an urgency that I later recognized to be the tired hum of the witness-bearer, upon whose heart rested the countless unspeakable events of her early life on the fringe, that northern boundary of our nation where the weather first rose up against us. And so we listened closely, my sisters and I, attuned to the import of her teachings.

A roof overhead and walls all around, she said to us, makes my daughters safe and sound, and it became a childhood rhyme of sorts, a phrase we often sang to ourselves as we walked to and from school, unaware of how dangerous our world would soon become.

As for the genesis of my trajectory, my mother knew enough of the story to tell me about my father's grandfather, the earliest of my ancestors still remembered for his fascination with the weather.

According to my mother, the old man remained at his wife's side long enough to conceive a son, my grandfather, before he set sail for the bottom of the world, flinging weather balloons and robotic sensors into the atmosphere as he went. On the ever-shifting

continent of ice, he studied the last remaining penguins, took core samples of glaciated ridgelines, and reported via radio to a government-appointed committee as to the nature of his findings, until one day he disappeared into an ice storm and never returned.

My mother warned me especially to exercise caution out of the house, to which I often responded with loud tantrums, thrashing, ill-conceived attempts to hold my breath and pass out. I hated that she patronized me so. After all, my sisters appeared as fragile as I, so her focused attention on me seemed unwarranted, insulting, though now I understand that her actions came as yet another way to prevent the arrival of my fate.

I remember in particular a day when one of my resentful outbursts led to the shattering of a window with a well-tossed ballerina figurine. The thunderclap of the toy crashing through the double-paned glass quickly drew my mother and sisters into the room and away from whatever play-craft they had begun without me. When she saw the broken window and the bright, clear sky beyond, my mother stepped over me, unlatched the inner frame, and lifted it and the remaining shards of glass away from the rest of the apparatus. She installed a new pane, which my sisters had helpfully retrieved from the hall closet, and locked down the brass handles at its sides, forcing the rubber gasket around the edges of the window to seal with a quiet gasp of air.

As I lay there on my stomach, I felt vaguely disappointed by my mother's quick work. We had long since sealed shut all the windows in the house, and I welcomed the jets of fresh air that had curled briefly through my room and ruffled the fabric of my dress. My disappointment soon turned to fear, however, when I saw how dark the sky had suddenly become, how rapidly the fog had rolled down the street toward our house, and I cried until she drew the blinds over the new window and carried me away to watch television beneath the high ceilings of our family room.

It is from this incident that I inherited my mother's awe of structures, their shape and form, the sturdiness of their foundations, the strengths of their materials, and the safety of the sheltered spaces within.

My grandfather's life was ended at a military outpost across the ocean where the abrasive sandstorms of a distant country worked away at unsheltered men, first at their clothing, then at their skin, and later still at their organs, before finally casting them to memory in bone-white remnants.

Dental records confirmed my grandfather's death, and his teeth eventually found their way into a jewelry box on my father's dresser, where they rested mysteriously until our house collapsed. On the wall above the yellowed teeth, a pocked and rusted medal

hung in a wooden shadow box, commemorating an act of heroism long since forgotten.

When my grandfather told his wife that the government had drafted him into the war, really a military intervention back then, she congratulated him for the chance to escape the stricken weather of their homeland. Perhaps then, she had reasoned, he would break away from the legacy of the father, the meteorologist turned iceman, and lead the family into a new preoccupation, one less inclined to the rotten skies.

She had good reason to hope for a change, though she never told her husband why. He died in the blur of the monstrous sandstorms before she could announce her surprise: she had given birth to a son, my father.

The weather soon escalated in force, increased its presence in the vicinity of our house, as it typically did with the coming and going of the seasons: rain fell harder, winds blew stronger, and fog grew thicker, though we silently gave thanks for the lack of lightning strikes. A scarcity of living targets retarded all cloud-to-ground activity; the citizens of our city had learned to remain indoors.

As time passed, we realized that the ferocity of this season seemed greater than that of last season and the season before:

the weather had snuck quietly but consumptively upon us. Our playful forays throughout the neighborhood ended. Our walks to and from classes became a series of tedious drives, and then they ceased altogether when the school system disintegrated. We monitored the weather reports on the radio for momentary clearings in the sky so that we might visit the grocery store to replenish our food reserves. We could take as much as we wanted: the grocer had disappeared, along with most of the neighborhood, and we found ourselves in a state of isolation.

Freed from the concerns of community, we took to close observation of the animals, and soon noticed a profound anxiety on the part of the birds in the city. They still fled to the caves in the south when they could, but more often than not, cloudbanks swiftly cut off their escape route, trapping the birds on the ground, in tree limbs, and against the sides of buildings, where they suffered, flattened one on top of another beneath the impressive force of thunderstorms, windstorms, tornadoes and hail. Soon they could no longer safely lift themselves into the air and fly away, and with this my sisters and I began to lose hope.

The storms, though fierce, had not yet taken to raging continuously, and on the occasion of a brief respite, we drew the curtains, scanned the streets for the hopeful sight of emboldened birds on wing to fairer skies. As the rains lulled, the blurry

silhouettes soon came into sharp focus: birds clinging to the lawn, flapping in the street, too numerous to count.

Why don't they fly away? I asked my mother.

She lifted me from the window, pressed a button to close the external shutters, and hurried me into the inner rooms of the house to join my sisters.

They haven't any strength, she said to me. The caves are far away, and they have nowhere to go.

We all stared at the television, which had long since stopped displaying any sort of regular program, news, entertainment or otherwise. Sometimes we could get cryptic messages from the emergency broadcast system, but at this moment the screen showed a kind of visual noise, an electronic snowstorm, the roar of which filled the room, eventually lulling us into dreamless sleep.

I never had a chance to know my father. I have only second-hand fragments with which to imagine his life and what it meant, and in his absence, these shards of fact take on the shape of a myth to me, the tale of a hero who lived just long enough to create a wonderful family of daughters.

He wanted only to have a son, my mother once told me.

A shame he didn't, I said.

And I have all of you now, she said, gathering us around her.

My mother usually refused to talk about my father. She considered him a reckless man for tempting fate, and I believe she resented him for the way he had angled further away from her after each new baby girl came into the world. The intrusion of certain visions, odors, and sounds would sometimes break her silence: a kite swooping above the tree line, the bitter smell of a struck match, the warning beep of a garbage truck in reverse. Her migraines came on horribly after such remembrances. I often heard her describe him with words I could not understand, words like *airworthy*, *tempestuous*, *cold-fronted*. Sometimes the tone in her voice provoked the pleasure in me of having discovering some new snippet of him, and other times I came to worry over his soul, to hate his body for making me into the confused person I had become.

When the doctors sexed me in the womb and told my father that he had created a boy, he rejoiced. He was not one to believe in fate. My mother, however, wept for fear of the curse and what suffering it would cause the entire family, and when my father witnessed the passionate nature of her fear, he began to doubt his own calm skepticism: what if his disbelief might cause the malediction to come crashing down upon his son tenfold?

He visited the local seer one night as my mother slept, and the old man told him that he must weather the anger of the ancestors if he wished for his son to survive.

What is it, then, that angers them so? my father asked.

They fear they've been forgotten, the old man said.

My father returned home shaken, kissed my sleeping mother and her belly, and left us to go on his quest. I don't know what he hoped to do, but I imagined some fantastic journey of remembrance and sacrifice before the altars of the sky.

At my mother's behest, a private investigator was commissioned to track my father's movements—this proved successful until my father reached the coast where, the report concludes, he hired a hot air balloon for himself and drifted higher and higher out over the ocean.

Several days later, my father's last words came in the form of a postcard, addressed to my mother, blank but for a single sentence:

Take care of the boy.

I resolved to bring aid to the grounded birds during the next break in the storm, and when the calm arrived, I enlisted the help of my sisters. A migraine had bedridden our mother, so she failed to detect our leaving the house, though we made sure to stay close as precaution against a sudden squall line.

We worked our way outward from the house in concentric circles which slowly grew to encompass the yard, the street, the playground beyond. Each time we had collected as many birds as

we could carry, we quickly ran into the family room and released them. We covered the entire carpet in a swath of old newspapers, and on this the birds settled, some tucking their beaks back under their wings, others listlessly gazing around the room. In this way we managed to save many of the birds in our neighborhood, though the scattered dead and dying ones in our wake told the tale of much damage already done. The storms soon blew back into the area, and we secured the house and sat together on the floor with the feathered survivors.

Our mother did not care for the birds at first; she kicked through them on her way to the couch, scolded us for leaving the house without her permission that first day of rescue. She complained about the constant rustle of feathers shifting in fitful sleep, the primitive stench of the dollops of shit that spread across the torn newspaper, the cushions of our furniture, the backs of our necks.

But when we showed her how a robin had made a haphazard nest in the magazine basket, using torn strips of newspaper, locks of knotted hair, a few sheets of tissue, she softened. The sight of the speckled eggs at rest in their makeshift nursery, of new life in this battered house, restored in her a long-lost sense of hope, and soon she began to accompany us on our rescues.

As the storms grew stronger, the windows of calm weather became shorter. Though we still managed to collect handfuls of

birds and bring them into the house for safe-keeping, no amount of work could prevent the empty spaces of lawn from filling again and again with different flocks of exhausted birds. They now seemed to migrate purposefully to our house, as if they knew they stood a chance at survival if only they could endure the beating storm until our hands plucked them from the ground.

When we could no longer exit the house without fearing for our safety, we remained indoors and took care of the birds, now grown into the oddest flock we had ever seen, all manner of species covering the floors of our house like an immense feathered carpet. Flightless from trauma or some corruption of instinct, they crept around the house, heads bobbing stupidly above useless wings, hopping and stopping, turning a wide eye longingly up at our high ceilings. They called to each other with weakened voices and drank from a bowl of water we had placed in the middle of the family room.

Then our mother moved the water bowl to the top of a high bookcase.

If they want to drink, they'll have to fly, she said.

And so my sisters and I, fearful that the birds might die of thirst, set about training them, teaching them, restoring in them their finest skill. My sisters and I worked with the smallest specimens. We held sparrows, bluebirds, wrens above our heads

and dropped them onto the soft surface of our couch. They often fluttered their wings lamely and then crash-landed into the shit-stained cushions. Occasionally some gained traction with their wings and flopped a distance to the hardwood floor, where they skidded along the newspaper. A few of these died on impact, and we gave them to the storms, weeping for the poor creatures that had become like family to us.

Others began to learn, and soon the smaller birds ably flitted here and there about the room, taunting the larger ones, the crows, the hawks, an old owl we had saved from the bowels of a rotted tree, all of which angrily shrieked and clawed at the walls.

Our mother worked with the larger birds for fear of our suffering beneath the sharpness of their talons. After the especially tiring training sessions, she served us dinner from our grand stock of canned goods, bloody scratches covering her arms and face.

Getting along? we asked her.

They'll learn, she said, or they'll die. She quickly downed her soup and then disappeared into the living room to take up her work again. Her work with the birds had given her a new duty, a fresh purpose. I did not realize then how hopeless our situation truly seemed to her, and this must have silenced that doubt, however temporarily.

The intensity of the storms often shook our house, rattled the windows in their frames, sent the birds into fits of shrieking.

Those that could fly whirled around our family room, flapping their wings with such fury that the feathers, the newspapers, the dried dung all rose into a heavy, cyclonic pungency. We could not calm them, could only retreat to our rooms and cover our faces with damp dish rags to avoid breathing in the impurities of the air until the war of the storm and the birds again subsided.

No one ever confirmed my father's death, and I sometimes imagined perhaps that alone kept me safe from my familial curse, dreamed of my father still circling this world, shivering, starving, wasted and shriveled up there in the basket of his hot air balloon, the winds of the jet stream pushing him onward. I began to devote evenings to wandering brazenly through the labyrinth of caves south of the city, braving the storms in a desperate search for a way out into another world. As I staggered along rock floors shot through with stalagmites, I improvised a prayer in remembrance of my ancestors, released it to the air in mantric whispers in hopes that it would save my father, free my family from the torment of these years. Take me, but spare my sisters, spare my mother, I prayed, my thoughts turning to their huddled bodies on the family room floor, surrounded by birds, waiting for me to return.

I prayed to my father, for what could I lose? If he were alive, perhaps the others would hear the words of a worried son and

cease their fits of vengeance. If he had died, then I had already begun to ensure that his life was not spent in vain, to carry out the duty of a son: to celebrate his father in memory, to take his father's place.

The weather finally took its toll upon the edifice of our house. The winds ripped the shingles from the roof. The rain beat down and infiltrated the seams and cracks, leaked into our rooms. Round pellets of hail crashed through our windows, rolled along the floor, made us lose again and again our already shaky footing.

The birds by this time had gone into their standard routine of worry: they shrieked at each other, pecked at the ground and walls, and shat over everything to lessen the heavy loads upon their bodies. As their weight decreased, the birds rose into the air above our heads. They filled the room with the beating of their wings. They blocked out the light of our candles, snuffed them one by one. They created a massive, moving ceiling of feathers and wings and beaks, then descended in helical fleets, forming a sort of living chamber around our shivering huddle.

Soon we heard the crash of wood as portions of the house broke off and swirled away into the storm. Bricks loosened and shook in their cavities, windows imploded, the roof peeled away, clots of insulation rose up into the sky. The protective cage of birds remained strong throughout the collapse, even as the framing

split and splintered, leaving us standing there upon the concrete foundation, wings beating about our heads. The force of their feathers seemed to enact a kind of pressure upon us, seemed to push us closer together, and we realized that they were sheltering us.

Just as our hands had once lifted them from danger, the birds, in their churning, swirling mass, now guided us away from the bare foundation, out into the street, and southward to the caves beyond the city. I parted the birds as if they were a curtain, and a flash of lightning revealed to me that we would travel safely. Peering out into the storm, I answered our father, gave him thanks, for I had not yet realized my descent.

Thomas O'Connell

Death by Dreamt Birds

The sky is full of revolution. Birds at my feeder no longer mean what they once did.

Don't talk to my mother. She will make me out to be the successor to St. Francis. This is because of my abuse at her hands as a child. I was forced to sit on the brick patio with my cupped hands outstretched. Seeds and pellets filled my palms. Birds came to trust me. They would swoop down to the low trees and trim grass surrounding the bricks while I remained still. Eventually they would light on my hands and feed and I would not move. The birds would gather on my shoulders, even when they were not hungry, and pull at loose strings on my t-shirt or the frayed threads around the holes in my jeans where my pale knees poked through. Birds with domestic urges built nests in my hair. I would wait with them, through rain and sun unmoving. I would see my mother at the kitchen window washing dishes or my sister in her bedroom listening to records when she was supposed to be doing her homework. When baby birds emerged from their eggs, I was there. As they grew older, their parents would edge them out onto my shoulders and push

them into attempts at flying. If the young birds were not ready for flight, they would drop to the ground by my thighs and I was not allowed to catch them. My hands were busy feeding other birds anyway. The birds were grateful for my patience; I was a warm statue for them. They wrote songs about me.

J a n e l l e A d s i t

T o p 1 0 C r a f t s o f T h i s L o s s

- 10 Wash your hands with fingerpaint.
- 9 Pluck tears and press in wax, something to see.
- 8 Dress a canvas, knowing how difficult it is to make skin.
- 7 Paint frost onto a tree branch, cooling those final hands.
- 6 Build the box for her radiance. Leave it open for as long as you can.
- 5 Weave into the loom of sky.
- 4 Collage leavings into one. There is no again.
- 3 Put a housefly in a model airplane; there are many ways of reaching.
- 2 Assemble a dollhouse of umbrella. We share shelter in passing.
- 1 Keep without an object.

Kristen Orser

The First Is a Dig, the Second Is a Slap

On average we are thirsty. This consists in digging out from dry riverbeds and swamps large frogs that have filled themselves with water in the rainy season.

Exits and exhales, though the opposite may be winked at. To breathe on a woman, the neck, after eating oysters is mentioned frequently in the myths. It's the vehicle by which our ancestors and gods arrived: The nape of a woman's neck.

I prefer the clavicle, the canoe, the slender after-boom. More tendency to float and wind. Tendency to keel, kneel, knee-knocking loves.

But a few weeks ago a man gave 17,000 coconuts as a betrothal present. He was chastised, not chaste, a vulgar boaster. He took to an island out of public view; shame is a killing thing.

Out of Keeping

I asked up the road and the road answered a meadow. To be lost in a meadow is to be found mirrored in obscene buttercups. It's almost pointless to say pansies. I was wearing a dress of bees and gathering blue bells that fell from my mouth. My breathing was inexhaustible, it was the only interesting thing happening. It was a kind of eternity to get from E to M. A patch of grass grew over me, spilling into the road.

At home, Matthew turned all the hourglasses at once. He doesn't know there are carcasses of cuttlefish under the teacups.

I asked down the road and the road answered a mill. The mill rolled out silence instead of the new country I'd been praying for. I watched out the window to see if my island would fill with water. When it did, I fell in love with a book I found in the river. I licked the book to see if it would cause stomach aches and wind. All the gulls left in a deafening exodus.

At home, Matthew broke all the clocks.

Tom Christopher

Historia

Even buildings remind us of the bodies, endlessly snagged in the factories, flung into ditches, crumbling softly between the aisles of the bus. One morning promises no tooth left behind, the next preaches there is no morning. We mine our pictures to prove we once stood together. We scrape our feet to wear and wear a path. No mention of how this room keeps changing with never a sign of the mover. *Hum the little things*, we whisper. *The way children eat and how proud we are for it*. When this year of shining is over, what will possibly be left?

Historia

Our straw dog has weathered the winter, our catapults lay shining in the switch grass. Everything is about to—but the looking stopped. We're scanning the last scraps of our plans: shirtless and dancing in the back lots, mining the radio for the tune of our reasons. Darkness replaces darkness and so on. Like the truest jackals, we will speak not of our beginnings, but chew the bones of our fathers. From the city of clicking lights, the river calls us down. The night is hot and thirsty for a bath.

Historia

Just as the brochure promised: the parking lot hidden, no wires sparking in the dawnlight. We uncovered our arms, hammered and shining. We uncovered our legs. A deer among the ferns! Bottle glass glinting! Snapshots of the stony breasts! Our inside ghosts clicked and whirred. We scattered our daily ashes. A new collective theory stalked in the grasses, its oily teeth joyful and mysterious. Night fell, and its transformers hummed. The jackals flashed brightly in our Maglites. Warily we rummaged, the vests, the postcards of the crooked peak. We stole the softest stones for a mantelpiece.

Historia

The city is a shining commercial—every building a new dance, every street a sing-a-long. We're sweating in the gutters, canting our hips and shaking the plastic eggs. The vendors assail us with the new smells of the future, yet no one is sure what a body is for. A veil flapping in the breeze? A jogging bag of salt water? A man on the corner preaches about the muck, about the terrible love, his hair lion-shaped and winking at us. We toss cracker packets to the umbral carp. *You might be a window but nobody is looking*, the old woman shouts to the pigeons. The bartending monks shush the unhushable drinkers. In the streets, we reenact the erosion of the beaches. Unspeakable lightening. When we dream at the table, we dream of satellites and red birth.

In Any Mistake

“In any mistake, Bill, find a rapid sequence of the mendicant squad.” Clara leaped up from an estimate for nubbins.

“The torn red carpet,” said Bill. “This projected audience is gruffly cease-fire.”

There were no other allusions to prudence, and two hours trickled by. Madeleine, in epaulettes, positioned herself before the next throttle. The window was just a Rotterdam window. Heat flanked the cuspidor.

“Each day, you’ve lamely resorted to flash.” Madeleine distributed copies of her overcoat.

“So long carefully,” Bill sang in his reflection. He had yet to see the fusillade resulting from her look. “The torn red carpet was maritime to you.”

Clara made much of uniform garlands, almost laughably congruent. Against all demands, those lucky barrels sputtered, imperative. No, the synergy of pleated parts had proven irresistible, too slick for damage. Twenty dollars down, they’d made a present of the diode. Only snooty slacks had kept the press on every block.

“We could jive before the highball,” Bill said quietly. “This shutter lacks a sternum.” Plain spirit needed roughly six weeks. Though automotive, commercial demolition had made the limpets slide.

In some circles, kidneys loomed as overflow. Angular, befitting. In the stores, Clara had shrunk barley to a sign. Her hair had scuttled home. Several precious metals, paleolithic, had quilted the work. Shortly thereafter, another striped blanket, wonderfully articulated, sighted armed debris. In the last month, the mystery of these was not unlike solvents or sniffing steadily. Even as the errors, more and more dazzling, bred sweet suspense, Bill could track Idaho. Their dialogue fostered Panamanian guilt.

Madeleine cursed the planes of wavy duplication. She was keen to send mail, to evict something nervously, while the boat was cold.

“You look like an oubliette,” she said. Very thin and crystalized, she fired the hurdy-gurdy. There were no kissy chops. With the advent of bunting, clavicles soared. Compulsively, affinities burned through her thigh. An imperfect chassis, trained to overlook, resonated faintly in the narrative night.

“All I am, I was myself moved to moan.” Clara could find no glandular taffeta. “In retrospect, Madeleine, one dollar filched the spot.”

Ben Mirov

Ghost of a Morning After You Left Me

I hover in front of the chain link fence for hours reading signs. My day is a long protracted silence. I pour myself into a phone call to avoid a little rain. Wind comes through a crack in the glass. They put new lights in the basilica months ago, I didn't notice. I program a future version of myself to remember a face slick with seawater, ringed with red hair. The message is sent back with nothing inside. I can't believe my life was like this three years ago. I would have sex and just lie there, thinking about things I had to do. I woke up in a grocery store. I was buying broccoli.

Sleepless Night Ghost

Lately, I go to a little shop where they sell machines that keep you up. People flow in and out of the infrastructure like haywire birds. It doesn't matter what I say to the recording device. Nothing can save the face blowing across the face. Someone catches me and shoves enough wire through my dream. Someone getting out of bed to the sound of someone showering. Someone eating pieces in the dark. It scares me through another night with no ideas. I need artificial clouds to give. If we are ever in a car together, I hope light pours through the windshield. I plan to be another language in the body of a deer.

Clark Chatlain

A p p r e h e n s i o n (*Sorting No. 2*)

no longer certain of my hands I approach low hills
all the eyes watch from the distant with stalks of wheat
no longer certain of my hands from the distant low hills
all the eyes watch I approach with stalks of wheat
no longer certain watch from the distant low hills
all the eyes of my hands I approach with stalks of wheat
all the eyes watch from the distant low hills
no longer certain of my hands I approach with stalks of wheat
no longer certain watch from the distant low hills
all the eyes of my hands I approach with stalks of wheat
no longer certain of my hands from the distant low hills
all the eyes watch I approach with stalks of wheat
no longer certain of my hands I approach low hills
all the eyes watch from the distant with stalks of wheat

S n o w (*Loop No. 1*)

these these are the are the snows that have snows that have fallen
behind my eyes fallen behind my eyes
these are these are the snows that have fallen the snows that have
fallen behind my eyes behind my eyes
these are the snows these are the snows that have fallen behind my
eyes that have fallen behind my eyes
these are the snows that have fallen these are the snows that have
fallen behind my eyes behind my eyes
these are the snows that have fallen behind my eyes these are the
snows that have fallen behind my eyes
these are the snows that have fallen behind my eyes these are the
snows that have fallen behind my eyes
these are the snows that have fallen these are the snows that have
fallen behind my eyes behind my eyes
these are the snows these are the snows that have fallen behind my
eyes that have fallen behind my eyes
these are these are the snows that have fallen the snows that have
fallen behind my eyes behind my eyes
these these are the are the snows that have snows that have fallen
behind my eyes fallen behind my eyes

F o r T o m m y (*Splicing No. 3*)

these are figures in light these are the sounds of horses
these are the sounds in light these are figures of horses
these are the sounds these are figures in light of horses

these are figures in light these are the sounds of horses
in light these are figures of horses these are the sounds
of horses these are figures in light these are the sounds

these are figures in light these are the sounds of horses
these are figures these are the sounds in light of horses
these are these are the sounds figures in light of horses

these are figures in light these are the sounds of horses
these figures in light are these the sounds of horses are
figures in light these are the sounds of horses these are

these are figures in light these are the sounds of horses
these are figures in light these are the sounds of horses
these are figures in light these are the sounds of horses

Kim Chinquee

She Almost Wished

The closet wasn't all bad. She'd moved the shoes over to get comfortable, and there were her mother's boxes, and she wondered what it was like to be a catfish in water, a saguaro cactus, a tomb. She didn't know the time, but figured it was about the hour of English, where her teacher would be talking Rilke, maybe, and she almost wished she was there now because she kind of liked her teacher, but it was too late to come out, she could hear his footsteps, after the sound of her mother's heels heading out, and then the garage door, and then her mother's cousin, who owned the house they lived in. And then the cousin's boyfriend, who she knew more about than anyone. She could tell from what she heard that he was in now. She was tired and didn't have the energy for much. She heard his footsteps. They kept on getting closer and she leaned against the door. She put her weight against it, feeling the resistance. She tried to be strong, holding the door shut.

Bending His Elbow

He sat next to her and told her of his story, about his woman with another man who wouldn't leave that other man even though she'd been deceiving him forever.

"Oh," she said, this listener. She thought of the chimes hanging on the porch of an old place she used to live, where it was usually humid, hardly every chiming, and she almost chimed in then, thinking of her husband—who wasn't her husband anymore—those chimes when he came in after one, three, five a.m., after he'd told her he'd be in at midnight.

Now she bent into him, thinking of mounds, and mends. She said, "It's an act," and she watched him bend his elbow and look at her, into her, as if he had no clue as to what she was talking about.

Bonnie Roy

M e m o i r

After the farm they moved closer to the radio. The legs
worn loosely as laps, the boy a musical version of the father
played to trigger suspense. Sadness, each face
was your vital mnemonic. In her view the house
grew smaller and smaller, miming itself at the last.
How we each happened
as shadows of the other, slight windows
printing the life with daylight.

Letter to Interlocking Up and Downside Hearts

I am one here.

I am one here and other, no gathering
swarm, no thronging or blurring together.

I develop a perfect sight here, the eye
rinsing the body profound.

I am no crowd here. I am so few I can see
each pure part of each other, each move. I am
no jostling love.

I am a side of you. I am stiff from a meaning we kept up for
centuries. I am a sever you.

I am in this shape where the world comes up to the windows
and breathes on the glass.

It is seven months since I've seen a crowd.

I am rocking for you, I am cradling you in a thought searched
often for breath.

We are so single.

We sleep in the body profound. The eye
makes its memory cloud of secret composition.

The eye sleeps in memory cities
of bright walls, sky walls, arms interlocked
and the legs at intricate angles, motions bound
in other motions.

I remember we moved by a banner of red and the glass broke
upon it.

The glistening threat of our voice. I remember we lay in a pit
with no names to call us,
and a bonfire split a plaza where rooms had demarked us.

I am one here in a story
assembled as love. I am one.

I tell a story called one and another whose meaning I keep
ages long, candlelit, of a body's travail for the body.

The end is a single vessel
encircled in blooms.

A u b a d e

my skin breaks in flames that was pink. my flesh atinder begs
me to go, my hair that was black is a smoke.

.

I can feel both my eyes where they seep. my eyes that you loved go
brackish uncolored. remember them gemmy, remember them
bright in a copse all darkened, leaflings slept still in the branch.

.

I loved your pearled, unapexed body. bedded of sweet leaves,
alstroemeria, rose.

.

you were my beloved and I rose with you from gold things,
from laurel shadows, and your body I loved as a jasmine
winding, loved pleating as lichens, loved roan.

.

my body you loved is flamed to alyssum, flashing tigers and
calla till none. my eyes that were gemmy are flamed to the iris
and dead.

.

my body you loved left the mark of a body, spent all the way to
the bones.

.

I loved your pearled, unapexed body, body of marigold,
spineflower thing. I saw you in cyclamen and spider mums,
finer than captured, fluted in coral and bronze.

.

you are my beloved and I held you as my beloved thing, my
sweeter than lupines, my smooth as a beech bough lovelier
wildness than bluebells, coneflower, rose.

.

I loved your pearled, unapexed body. deeper than bedstraw,
deeper than aster, a violet felt in the breath.

.

sweetest they left me in branches thrusting with fire. they left
me staked to the body, full of the body, alone.

.

I never felt slighter. I never felt my skin through the ash of the
face but I loved your pearled, unapexed body, staked to the
body, breaking in coral and gold.

C h a i n

‘,’

Hand says so to hand.
Hand says so, hand
says pressure of mouth
as a palm we are paired to.
Hand says so only to hand
we are holding.
Hand says so as pressure
of palm, hand as mouth
is pressure of palm
we are paired to.
Hand says so to hand
we uncover of other gesture.
Hand says so only
to hand we are holding.
Hands in hands, we
are standing hand to hand.
Palms to palms all
in a chain we are pressing

only hand to hand
we are paired to.

‘ ,

Hand we are paired to,
hand we are holding,
we want to.

Hand we are pressing,
we want to.

Hand we are listening
in hand to, we want to.

Want to be paired to,
want to hold onto,
want to be pressed to
and listening, want to.

Hand, we want to
hold you hand in hand
with us. Hand, we want
to hold you hand to hand,
hand to face. Hand
we have felt as mouth,
hand we've beheld as face,
we want to hold you
mouth and face, hand,

we want to hold you
here and there. Hand,
we are held as pure
hearts in you. Hand,
we want something
to press to. Hand,
let us hold a face to you,
move a mouth to you,
hand, hand, hand,
let go for our faces,
let go for our mouths,
let us go hand
from hand to you.

‘ ,

Hand says so to hand
in a chain. Hand says so only
to hand it holds onto.
Hand we are holding,
we want to. Hand, we would
let go to hold you. Hand,
you are hurting us not to.
Hand says hold on
to hand it is next to,

hand to hand says
we cannot press to you
except to press through
all this chain to you.

Hand says hold on
to hand it holds onto.

N o r m a n L o c k

A T h e o r y o f T i m e

All things are words of some strange tongue, in thrall
To Someone, Something, who both day and night
Proceeds in endless gibberish to write
The history of the world.

—Borges

for Andrew Comi

I

We ride only on the tracks that are orange with the rust of time.
How else avoid those other trains crisscrossing a land notable
for the variety of its features—observing schedules, answerable
to purposes clearly understood by the presidents of railroad
companies and their most casual passengers, alike? We follow
no schedules; and if there is a purpose to our endless divagation,
I never knew it. (That the performances might be a figment of
my or someone else's imagination is a thought that increasingly

occurs to me.) I begin to suspect that we are traveling to no purpose; that the train appeared one day on these rusted rails as if by an act of spontaneous generation such as van Leeuwenhoek claimed to have observed in his retort after the introduction of an electrical current in water.

I do not remember when I first came to be here. Perhaps I, too, unfolded suddenly like a Japanese paper-flower in water—like the animalcules in van Leeuwenhoek’s laboratory. But something tells me this is not the case: memories, for one thing. I can recall a time when I was not on the train. A boyhood in a town red with brick factories and gray with smoke and dust. And later, life aboard a merchant ship, if the few impressions I have of it can be said to be a life. I seem to have been skillful with a marlin spike; to this day, I can feel in my hand its weight and the rope stiffened by salt water. Of course, they may be someone else’s memories. Who is to say that we cannot receive another’s recollections like a legacy—an unsuspected inheritance from an uncle who, until the moment when the lawyer informs us that we have come into some money or a property in Ravenna, we never knew existed?

I was the train’s brakeman. This much is certain. I remember it in my absent thumb, the pain of its dismemberment. We had stopped for the night in an ancient forest. I would not have been surprised to find Yggdrasil presiding over it—so

Germanic the gloom, so primeval the silence. Bewitched into a moment's carelessness, I offered up my finger to the coupling. I feel it still—the pain when finger and bone came away in the train's iron fist. I doubt I would feel it so keenly were it someone else's loss.

In the mirror, I appear to be a man of sixty. But mirrors lie; and on such a train as this, what treachery might not they practice? But let us say sixty, or a little less. I was a young man still when I suffered my mutilation. It has been, then, many years since I have been other than a brakeman. I was not relieved of my occupation because of my accident. I continued for a time after it—of this, too, I am sure. It was for some other reason that I ceased to be a brakeman. My own or some other's.

I am now an assistant to the impresario. I say "an assistant," for I cannot be certain that I am the only one in this capacity any more than I am sure another brakeman is in the rear of the train performing my former role. I can only assume that one is: a train must have a brakeman. He may well be asleep at this moment in one of the rear cars set aside for the brakeman—the car I once shared with the flagman, whom I never see anymore. The end of the train is not visible because of the great number of cars, or the frequent turning of the tracks, or the darkness that seems always to be in our rear. As if the train were on the edge of night. The engine and the caboose following immediately behind

it are the only cars that have not been tainted yet by that unnatural dark. A premonitory darkness ranged malevolently against us. I feel it just as a gravestone might the pressure of a hand intent on robbing it of its inscription. The engineer maintains that it is only our locomotive's coal smoke blackening the sky.

Nor have I ever seen the impresario. He communicates with me by telegraph, which I can operate and whose language—telegraphy—I understand. Somehow understand, just as I do the many languages in which the telegrams are composed by the impresario, or impresarios; there may be more than one, which would account for the polyglot transmissions: Hungarian, Hebrew, Greek, English, French, German, Italian, Armenian—even ancient and dead languages such as Sanskrit, Phoenician, and Ge'ez. It amazes me how, after a momentary incomprehension, while the receiving key clicks in dots and dashes a communiqué from the last car, suddenly—like a black sky riven by lightning—I understand!

I sit in the chair and take down the impresario's thoughts. They arrive perfectly articulated and composed in logical paragraphs. When the key falls silent, I roll on the chair's oiled castors to the small desk with its typewriter and reproduce the impresario's dictation. In spite of lacking a thumb, my typewriting is infallible. Finished, I proofread the text, enclose it in

a Manila envelope, then toss it out the window onto the right-of-way. I have no idea whether it is ever found, or read, or set in type and printed. What use the story—the history—of our performances may serve for readers in towns through which we have already passed and to which we will never return—I long ago ceased to speculate. For we never go back, unless it is to hunt for a way forward after having arrived at an impasse. I am ill-suited for my work, yet I manage it well enough and, except for an arthritic condition of my nine remaining fingers, no longer am incommoded by it.

I never leave the caboose or the locomotive's cab. Not now. There is no point. All that concerns me arrives by telegraph, by dots and dashes.

2

The engineer does not remember a time when he was not an engineer, although there may have been other locomotives in his past besides this one. I seem always, he says, to have been sitting or standing in a cab begrimed with coal dust and ringing with the tumult of history. He wanted to participate in history—this, he recalls as a man does with fondness a boyhood

memory, of speckled fish, say, drowsing beneath the scarcely troubled surface of a brook.

“How better to participate in history than to drive an engine through it?” he tells me while we are eating Spanish sardines. “Yet I have seen nothing clearly through the windows, as the train rushes forward or sometimes backwards. It is the same when recollecting the body of a lover—all a blur no matter how determined one was in bed to observe this or that part of her.”

If ours is its engine, as the engineer claims. I myself have yet to understand how our train stands in relation to history, which appears to eddy all about us as we move within it, on axes of rusted steel, which include surprising switchbacks and spurs. None of which has been set down on any map, at least none in our possession. The train stops arbitrarily, when it does stop at all. More than once the engineer has assured me that the train is obedient to his hand and his alone, although I have seen the sweat start out from his forehead as he tried unsuccessfully to hold the throttle open, or, conversely, to apply the brake against the train’s irresistible momentum.

“And did you never walk back to the end of the train?” I ask, daubing at my moustache to rid it of fish oil.

“Never—what for?” he asks, his voice tonic with surprise.

“To see one of the performances!” I cry impatiently.

“When I was young, I may have been interested in performances,” he remarks idly, while digging with a matchstick the grease from beneath his fingernails. “But no longer—and the end of the train is remote for a man with bad feet.”

“So you did see them?” I shout. I do not understand why I am so vexed.

“I seem to remember a very tall man and a bearded lady...a trained bear and a juggling act...an exhibition of naked female flesh. But I can’t be sure that it was at the end of *this* train where I saw them. Doubtless, I was once employed by the Orient Express: I would not picture myself wearing a fez and revolving a string of beads through my fingers otherwise. The women may have belonged to the harem of a sultan.”

I want to interrogate him further, but he falls asleep. It is his prerogative; the night is already well advanced, the moon entangled in the trees on the western ridge of the mountain. (I mean the world’s natural night, a gift to men and women, not that other.) I climb back into the caboose, leaving the engineer with his hand on the throttle. Whether he is awake or not makes no difference to our progress; the rails rest on sleepers—the tracks are laid to serve the excursions of thought itself. This is not to say that the train is metaphysical: it is real—make no mistake!—and the terrain through which it passes can be

analyzed according to theorems of solid geometry. But at times, both train and landscape evade our observation; they become subject to invisible strains, rearrangements effected by unseen forces, and something like transfiguration, though this latter state is rare. We know of its occurrence only by rumor, whispered sometimes late at night by the imps in the firebox.

By “we,” I mean the engineer and myself. The impresario confines himself in his telegraphed messages to factual statements concerning the performances, whose history lengthens according to a principle I cannot grasp. How could there have been a demonstration yesterday of lion-taming, for example, when, according to the engineer, the train did not stop at all? I grant that a performance is possible within the space of a dream—someone’s: the impresario’s, perhaps, or the lion’s. The engineer is unconcerned, preferring to relate to me the history of the railroad, the invention and technological refinements of the steam locomotive, and to make an inventory of the provisions. Since we never run short of provisions, I tell him there is no need to inventory them. But he enjoys it, he says. Counting the tins, the bottles and mason jars. Whole numbers, he says; whole numbers are comforting.

When the train does stop, the engineer will sometimes climb down from the locomotive and walk into the trees—provided there are trees lining the right-of-way. I follow him

with my binoculars until he vanishes among them, absorbed by their entrancing gloom. Invariably, he will return in a radiant frame of mind.

“What do you do in the forest?” I ask him, pulling at his striped trousers’ cuff.

“I do what I must,” he answers; or, “I retrieve lost time,” or “I undermine the train—within limits, always within limits!”

“What do you mean?”

But he laughs and will say no more while he opens a tin of sardines or small boiled potatoes.

3

One day when the train has stopped, the flagman appears from behind the bend ahead of us. Furling his flag and tucking it under his arm, as if it were not a flag but a sergeant major’s baton, he climbs onto the locomotive, which I am guarding in the engineer’s stead. As is customary when the enterprise comes, for whatever reason, to a standstill, the engineer has disappeared into the trees. I do not fear for the safety of the train nor has anyone assigned me the role of custodian, but I relish the proximity of the great steam engine, which seems, now that the train lies motionless, a kind of domestic familiar, such as a cat rumbling contentedly on a windowsill. There are

also the engineer's calendars stacked in a disused bin—year yielding inevitably to the one before in a recession of time and *dishabille*. I admit to a sentimental fondness for Robert Giraud's photographs and the naughty etchings of Xavier Sager.

"How is it that you arrived *ahead* of the train?" I ask the flagman, who is preparing an espresso with the aid of the steam boiler. "Unless I'm mistaken, we have yet to make that next turning?"

The flagman blows the demitasse's smoking top. "Have you any cinnamon?"

I give him some.

"Do you have a theory of time?" he asks, resting the little cup and saucer on his knee.

"None that I'm aware of. Do you?"

"Time spins like a cyclone; and as it does so, it wobbles—forward, backwards, to the right or to the left. Gathering speed or slowing, inching along or making a surprising leap. And all the while, it is gathering up whatever is in its path—jugglers, acrobats, trombonists, anarchists, lions, poets, even elephants. You can easily understand how, sometimes, one may arrive ahead of it."

I lean forward, like a connoisseur suddenly in the presence of the object of his desire. "Are you saying that this train is a *circus train*?"

"It can be—at times, it is. At other times, it isn't; it's something else. You ought to know: you are the train's author."

"But one wishes, for once, to have one's words verified," I remark calmly, in a voice that belies my frustration, my anguish. "To be assured of the truth of what one writes, or its falsity. Besides, I am only an amanuensis, not an author."

"Then why not see for yourself?" he leers.

"I don't seem to be able," I temporize. "I've become sedentary. I write, I seldom go outside. In fact, I never do, except to stretch my legs a little. But I don't go far! Once I went as far as a car full of soldiers. Wounded soldiers. I was attracted by their groaning, their cries. I was frightened and hurried back to the caboose. The next day I returned with my notebook. To take down their testimony. To record my impressions. To gather background for the writing of a report. But they weren't there—the car was gone. In its place, a wagon of gypsies. One of them read my palm: she said that my missing thumb would be restored and I would become a brakeman. Ridiculous!"

The flagman shrugs, sips his espresso, looks out the window onto the empty right-of-way, sits the cup and saucer once more on his knee, says: "Time wobbles back and forth and from side to side, picking up this thing and that. Why not gypsies?"

He seems to fall asleep. I put a recording of *La Sonnambula* on the gramophone, crank its handle; Caruso leaps into the

silence—his voice, crackling from out the tundish. The flagman opens his eyes.

“The 1905 Metropolitan revival was brilliant,” he remembers. “A *success d’estime*.”

I nod. A silence ensues.

“Don’t people say that a tornado sounds like a train roaring by?” he asks in an offhanded way, like one setting a trap.

Again, I nod.

“It’s the sound time makes as it rushes past. If you put your ear to the rail, you can hear it clearly: the din of history, not to mention the screams.”

“Our train, then, is time?” I ask.

“I never said that!” he shouts—whether at me or beyond me through the cab’s window is unclear. He is silent a moment, then continues: “We, who ride this train, are aware of our place in time in the same way that the truly giddy are of their place on the turning earth.”

“And when, like now, the train is stopped?”

“We’ve entered the stillness at the center of time—the eye of time’s storm. And what better time or place to give a performance?”

“Of what?” I ask, much annoyed by his cheerfulness, which seems misplaced. Irreverent even. Unless it is the gloom, like a yellowish, brownish stain inside the locomotive, which has

made me spiteful and afraid. Never in my experience has it dared to invade our precincts, which have been free till now of confusion, if not doubt.

“Of whatever at that moment pleases us most,” he replies, taking no notice of my ill will. “Or whatever is most in need of expression. Ours are not ordinary performances: they are desires made visible, not to mention the manifestation of our anxieties, which are desires’ accompaniment.”

He sets down his demitasse on the iron sill. I observe that the coffee is filled to the brim, though he has been drinking it. Secretly, I preen in my ability to have made so fine an observation in spite of the gloom, which is spreading, and my head, which is swimming.

The flagman polishes his boots with coal soot. Why this, the most ordinary of acts, should cause in me a feeling of terror I do not know. Whistling a theme from Bellini’s opera, he buffs them with an oily rag.

My heart—what’s the expression? My heart is in my mouth—and I get ready to eat it.

From the caboose, I hear the telegraph key hiss, in a single angry elision, its magisterial disdain.

“What lies up the track?” I ask nervously.

“‘Up,’ ‘down,’ ‘sideways’—they have no meaning, for us,”

he says, admiring boots that might have been glossed by the night itself.

“What did you see—wherever it was you were—before you came round the bend and saw me?” I shout, my hands at his throat.

Imperturbable, he tears my hands away, coughs, says: “Smoking cities...blood-soaked fields...endless desert...an ice age...the aeroplane.”

“What’s an aeroplane?” I ask, entranced by the word as if he has pronounced a blessing or a curse on us all.

He smirks, so that I want to fly at him again. Possessed by a sudden listlessness, whose source I cannot identify, however, I remain where I am, inside the iron cab, at the still point. It is as if I and all the world outside the train were drained of potential by a swift plunge of millibars.

“It waits to be discovered or rediscovered, in time, which also has in it forgetting and recollection. This is what is meant by *déjà vu*. To remember the future.”

The recording slows; Caruso’s voice drawls, elongates like taffy, metamorphoses into that of an animal and then, attaining at last a mineral modality, falls silent.

“And will time itself stop and, like a spent top, come crashing down or, like a cyclone, peter out?” I loathe this flagman,

whom I thought was my friend, unless this flagman and the one whose car I shared are not the same. I loathe him but am helpless against the unfolding of his theory, whose shape reminds me of a portmanteau bag. "For God's sake, finish and be done with it!"

"Time has stopped many times already. Not as this train stops: the train is not time but rides upon its rails. Of course, this is merely a figure of speech and, like all tropes and metaphors, only partially true. Mostly, I suspect, they lie; but how are we to think about abstractions otherwise?"

I want to know only if the communiqués that I deposit in Manila envelopes along the tracks are true. Are we really marionette theater, burlesque house, circus, freak show, music hall, *grand guignol*, anatomical theater, astronomical observatory, maze of mirrors, botanical garden, inquisition, museum of machines, zoo, waxworks—how is it possible that a single train can be all this and more besides?

He leaves before I can sound him. Perhaps he looked into my mind and read the question there and had no answer. (Or was sworn to secrecy by the impresario.) I watch him walk along the reach of track to the vanishing point. For a moment, there is only his flag to signify his having been, and soon not even that.

A man steps from behind a cairn. Over his shoulder, he carries a portrait camera and tripod. He wears a tweed coat and bowler, spats and gloves, and looks altogether suitable to an upland moors. The train has yielded, temporarily, to a flock of sheep. What seem sheep standing in shadow to the unaided eye become, when magnified by my binoculars, boulders. Not a flock of boulders, surely! A labor, perhaps, or a team, a mustering, a brood, or an unkindness. But how can I be certain that the optical mechanics of magnification do not transform one thing into another? Or in the time it takes to train and focus the instrument, sheep might not become boulders by some principle of metamorphosis unknown to me? The objects on the tracks do appear to be moving.... But boulders, having tumbled down the ravine towering above us, could possess inertia to move them onward, at least for a while. Why not always? Who can say that a thing once set in motion does not continue in some way or another, along unseen paths, by secret and devious passages, in spite of Newton and his apple? If I could magnify time as I do space, mightn't I see even the mountain creep into the valley?

“Hello!” calls the man, teetering on a rail.

"Come up," I answer, eager for company now that the engineer has gone to sleep.

He hands up his camera and tripod, then climbs aboard.

"Would you care to have your portrait taken?" he asks after he has settled himself and his equipment within the narrow limits of the caboose.

I tell him I would, but cannot give him an address where I might receive the developed print. He assures me that it will find me no matter when or where—that we will, my photograph and myself—meet, in time.

"By the laws of attraction," he says. "Like to like and likeness to its original. Inevitably."

He asks me my name, and I tell it him.

"I have read your stories," he says with solemnity, gazing at the typewriter as if it were its stories he meant.

"I have written no stories!" I object rudely.

"No?" he asks, surprised. "Not even one about a hippopotamus bathing in the rank, green water along the right-of-way? Or musicians who serenade beneath the balconies of the moon? Or the funeral march of a marionette? Or a talking ape who dueled with a cigar for the love of a woman named Mrs. Willoughby? Or a waxworks in the Belgian Congo? Or the revenge of Hyde? Or the invention of a photographic process by

which the invisible is made visible? Or a stenographic exhibition where an amanuensis took dictation from the dead?”

“They are factual accounts of actual performances given at the end of this very train!” I shout. “They were dictated to me by the impresario over *that*!” I point to the telegraph key. (I notice that it is rusty and festooned with spider’s web.)

“Forgive me, sir, I have misunderstood,” he says. “I did not understand the nature of the enterprise or your activities therein. One is easily misled. Forgive me.”

I am not mollified.

“What has misled you into thinking my reports were anything but the truth of what has occurred? That I am not a chronicler of history? Explain yourself!”

“I have seen several of the performances—”

“You have?” I cry, seizing his wrist with violence enough to make him whelp.

“You’re hurting me!”

Smoldering, I let go his wrist, roll back on my chair to put him once more at his ease. Silence reigns briefly, in which I imagine him counting “one...two...three...four,” as if exposing a photographic plate in the flash of my anger.

“The performances had been minutely described—by you—in the form of a story—in a book of stories attributed to

you—before I ever saw them at the end of this train. You understand me, sir? The enactments follow your account of them.”

I think this strange and unlikely, but say nothing.

“You did not, by chance, photograph the performances, which you saw?” I ask instead.

“Why, yes.”

He takes from inside his coat a small album bound in Morocco leather. He removes his wire-rim glasses, whose lenses are unusually thick, polishes them on a handkerchief, puts them on again, looping the wire parentheses about his ears. He opens the album. I lean over his shoulder the better to see the photographs.

“They’re blurry!” I complain. “I can’t make anything out!”

He is incensed. “I assure you they are not! Or if they are slightly out of focus, it is the fault of the subjects. Everything moved. It was beyond the shutter’s capacity to stop it.”

“This waxwork dummy?” I shout, incredulous. “This poor chained beast? Or this hanged man on a gallows? Surely, he did not move?”

He bangs the album shut; I listen to the volley of his displeasure inside the rocky defile engulfing us. “The whole earth moves,” he says dryly, an ear cocked as if to hear it move.

I howl with laughter as the photographer gathers up his belongings and leaves. He goes behind the cairn—to sulk, I imagine. I glare at the typewriter, hating it, feeling in my fingertips a history of pain. The pain of words.

The train begins to move, the deafening roar of its engine drowning all other sounds.

Whether sheep or boulders, it matters not at all. In a geologic age, what might not anything become? The train advances as if nothing at all were there to arrest it. Or what might be, belonged to another time.

5

We are hurrying through the night. The iron locomotive is cold to the touch, though the boiler blushes with the fury of combustion. The engineer is awake and companionable. He smokes a pipe, which is, in miniature, a firebox ardent with fragrant embers and dreams. Its smoke mimics the immense river of fume endlessly unwinding from out the locomotive's stack—lost now, where all is blackness, in night's vast ocean. The stack, too, resembles the gramophone's tundish; and the rails by day and at night with the locomotive's beam upon them are like a scar upon the body of the earth. It amuses me to consider the

correspondences between the similar and the dissimilar by which the world is constituted and made whole.

“It’s all an illusion, you know,” the engineer says into his pipe, causing a shower of incandescence to erupt from its bowl, the bowl which I have seen him polish on the flanks of his broad nose when he is caught in a dream of who knows what—his other life in the trees, perhaps.

I cast upon him a cunning look of bewilderment; for I do not trust him, though sometimes—let me admit it now!—I love him. What else is there, here, for me to love?

Removing the pipe stem from between his teeth, he goes on: “What you were thinking just now, it isn’t true.”

Suddenly, I know what he says to be the case and feel as the condemned man must, hearing the lever yanked, which releases the trapdoor separating his boots from eternity.

The engineer knocks the dottle from his pipe as he gazes through the window at the night’s reeling sky. Pointing first to the one, then to the other with the stem, he says: “The Southern Cross and, there, the Great Bear—how is it possible, ——?” (He said my name.) His voice is shaken by a profound emotion, which may be fear, or wonder, or something else.

I am moved nearly to tears to hear him say my name, so rarely do I hear it said at all. Except, from time to time, in a dream when a young woman in white speaks it from across the

room, in a house between a river and an olive grove. It is always, in the dream, night with not so much as a cricket to interrupt the stillness, or a firefly to lighten it.

He shovels coal into the firebox; the iron door rings once against the shovel's blade as he roughly closes it. That ghastly sound seems to echo among night's bastions, whose shadows swallow us all.

"A cold night," he says, wiping his hand on his striped mechanic's overalls.

"Do you have a theory of time?" I ask him shyly.

He taps with the toe of his heavy boot the bin in which his calendars accumulate, one year's followed by the next. "Time is as iron and inexorable as this locomotive," he says, "and as cold as tonight. Only in the bodies of women do I find consolation for having been born into it."

"Is that what you find in the trees?" I ask.

In the moonlight streaming through the window, I see the old man blush. Old, though only yesterday, or the day before, he was no older than I am now.

"We will come soon to an immense desert," he says, gazing sadly at night's falling dominoes. "It will be a long time until we see trees again."

"How do you know when there is no map and we've never before traveled this way?"

I pretend to be calm so that he may let slip some secret of our journey, which is, for me, aimless and obscure. But he says only that an engineer knows such things, that his instincts reveal what is hidden from sight. He uses the word foretold, which recalls for me the flagman's theory of time, which I do not understand, though I have thought of it many times over the years.

"You can count them—the calendars...." This, my answer to the question of how many years he has been our train's engineer, which once I asked him. The terrain was different from this—a plain, green and limitless, marred by clouds' lumbering shadows. They made me think of buffalo herds slaughtered from a train, which I don't think was this one, but some other. Some other track. Some other time. "You who like so much to count provisions could count the calendars in the bin and know then how long you've been here."

He smiles at my innocence, says: "In the beginning, I had no need of calendars. I was happy to give myself completely to time. So counting them now would be inconclusive."

"You never went into the trees then?"

"I tell you there was no need! Life aboard was sufficient. There was no need that was not provided for by the company."

"The company might have had the foresight to include among the rolling stock a car of women—for the coupling of

brakemen!" I laugh idiotically. "A rolling brothel." I continue in a voice tinged with weariness and disgust. "We have everything else."

"There is such a car, at least from time to time one appears that answers to its description."

"And you never visited it?"

In spite of myself, I feel my pulse quicken with the voyeur's wild agitation, as if seeing in the mind's eye were enough. And perhaps, for one afflicted with imagination, it is enough.

"Once or twice, no more," he says. "I did not wish to find my pleasure on a manifest among sardine tins, pachyderm, and instruments of torture. It was, as I recall, a performance in which desire was acted out. I left feeling anxious. And appalled."

"What will you do when the desert comes?" I ask uneasily.

"What I have always done," he says.

I study his face: it seems to be that of the moon itself—white, luminous, and cruel.

"Kill myself."

6

Only once have I seen another train. We arrived together in a narrow valley—our train and some other. The two parallel lines

of tracks were forced close together by cliffs on either side of the river, which separated them and the rails. Ours, orange with rust; the other, silver—bright as mirrors in the sun, so that the eyes stared as if stuck open, and only by shaking one's head would they close. I looked at our train's reflection in the river, hoping to see its end; but the cars pulled behind the locomotive and caboose were without number.

That train was crowded with passengers. For the space of time we traveled together, side by side with only the narrow river between us, I could see men and women sitting in their seats, reading newspapers and magazines or sleeping, or else walking up and down the aisles—even passing between swaying cars on their way to their berths, or to dinner, or to the observation car at the end of the train. And though I waved and shouted, they seemed not to notice us. I was close enough to see their faces, their hands in their laps, or in their knitting, or clasped by other hands. These, I took to be the hands of lovers, perhaps couples on their honeymoons. At no time in my life have I known anguish to equal this, when I saw those men and women holding hands. So that is love, I said to myself. And again, I tried unsuccessfully to attract their attention.

"They do not see us—not even from the observation car," the engineer said. "We may be traveling side by side with only a few meters separating us, but we occupy different times. Or if

the same time, we are more aware than they of its qualities and aspects, dimensions and liabilities. It is that awareness and not those lovers that cause you anguish. Consciousness is the full awareness of time.”

“I would rather be on that other train,” I said bitterly.

The engineer said nothing; and in a little while, the mountains fell away behind us, the land broadened, the two tracks veered apart, and I saw neither the train nor its fortunate passengers again.

7

Just as the engineer foretold, we have come to a desert. There are no trees now where he can take his ease, or practice his subversion, or immerse himself in time’s fullness—or escape from it. In the shimmering distance, I see tents, which appear to soar against the unending sands. The tents are colorful and moored by camels and horses, or so it seems from my remote and moving vantage.

غ ئ

Peering through binoculars, I can see Arab girls dancing at the center of intricate Arabic letters written with silken scarves on the

still air. The scarves are rose-colored, pink, orange, blue, and green. At dusk before night sweeps like a scimitar vanquishing day, the sand will borrow the colors of those numinous scarves; and tiny lights, as if at faraway depots, will mark the place of those mysterious encampments, lost in a vague and noiseless world. A world where time is marked only by the alternation of day and night.

The engineer keeps silent, shut away with his memories perhaps, while the train hurls itself against the desert at an impossible rate of speed, so that the duration of day and night is registered by no more than a flickering light against the never-ending rails ahead of us. Or behind us. Or above us, for sometimes we seem to be riding with the sun or moon under our feet, though it may be only the glimmer of the tracks. It must not be forgotten that we are traveling in the land of mirage.

In spite of our velocity, we spend years crossing the desert.

One day it is finished.

Limitless sand gives way to illimitable snow; gold becomes white by a perversion of alchemy. Flatland becomes tundra; and dune, tumulus as the train enters an ice age. The engineer cannot be wakened. It does not matter that he sleeps, except that I feel very much alone. I keep to the caboose, taking no interest in what can be seen through its windows. In London once, I heard Peary address the British Cartographic Society concerning his arctic

expedition. He claimed a terrible beauty for the place, but I see only death in it.

I think I am slowly freezing to death.

[. . .]

I hear a clatter on the roof of the car next to mine—not a clatter, a measured, mincing tread amplified by the metal roof but dulled by cold, dead air. A girl climbs down the caboose's ladder. I help her inside. She is wearing only slippers and a kind of corset such as once I saw at the *Palais du Trocadero*. I think she must be on the verge of extinction to be so scantily attired in this frigid place! I wonder she does not shiver, that her lips are not blue and her fingers black with frostbite.

"I've left my balancing-pole on the roof," she says. "Will it be all right, do you think?"

"Who are you?" I cry as one will finally, who has seen quite enough marvels in his lifetime.

"The tightrope walker," she replies, looking at me with alarm; for I was at that moment tearing at my eyes, as if to have them out once and for all.

"Tight-rope-walker," I say, adding mine to the echoes of what has come and gone or is still to be.

"From the circus. Why are you acting so strangely? Please stop before you hurt yourself!"

“This is, then, a circus train?” I ask, hoping to have found, at last, the ungainsayable truth.

“Yes. What else?”

“And has it always been so?”

“As far as I know.”

“How far is that?” I ask, searching her face for signs of treachery.

“For as long as I’ve lived,” she says, much annoyed. “My mother and father performed on the high-wire. They fell to their deaths from it.”

“But aren’t you cold in that costume!” I shout, confused.

“A little, from the wind on the roof. The train’s going so fast!”

“You walked all the way from the rear of the train?”

I could love this woman, were there time enough. I could take her in my arms and stop time, though her eyes are not yet shadowed by sorrow.

“Yes, it was very exciting!” she said, clapping her hands like a child.

“Over so very many cars?” I say, amazed.

“Oh, there aren’t so many as all that!”

“And what season of the year is it?”

“Summer. July. What is the matter with you?”

“Summer. July. Did the impresario send you?”

“Impresario...if you mean the Signore, owner of our little circus—yes. He’s very angry. Why hasn’t the train stopped?”

It has been many years since the train last stopped. Not since the desert—even before that, on a plain in a battle’s aftermath. Men lay in a muddy ditch, or hung on wire in attitudes of submission to history and its follies. The sun was eclipsed by cannon smoke. Unless it was the train’s own smoke spreading like a canopy overhead as it lost its inertia.

“We ought to have stopped two hours ago! The people were lined up on either side of the track, waiting to welcome us. The engineer did not even sound the whistle! The Signore was very angry. He sent me over the roofs to see what was wrong.”

“Why didn’t he telegraph me?” I ask, turning to the telegraph key. But it is not there. The typewriter is also gone.

She looks at me as if I were something other than I am, or thought myself to be. A thing apart. She climbs into the locomotive to wake the engineer, who is dead. Or revolving through his fingers a *tespih* while he sits before the Cilician Gates, in the Taurus Mountains where the Euphrates begins its descent.

“You must stop the train!” she shouts, shaking me like one who is asleep.

“Me? I don’t know how!”

The train is hurtling toward destruction, an iconoclasm that will deliver me from all forms and performances, to a forgotten

siding where I may rest and dream unmolested a theory of time. I stare, entranced—not afraid in the least that there are neither rails nor ties beneath me.

“But you are the brakeman!” she screams. But already she is fading, like a photograph improperly fixed to resist the seduction of obscurity. It is a great burden to be in time and to know that one is, just as it must be for those giddy ones, who feel always the earth’s turning beneath their feet.

Where my thumb was, I feel an itching prelude to growth. My hand is remembering. Soon I will remember myself as brakeman and, perhaps, even as once I was, before I unfolded like a paper flower into time—a young man not on a train and, perhaps, happy.

Stephen Ellis

Four Scab Dictations Out of Rimbaud

I from "Start," *Illuminations*

Enough intention. The vision is chanced upon in every breath.

Enough of *them*. Dins of cities, of night, of sun, of eternity.

Enough knowledge. The arresting of lives—O uproar in seeing!

Begin from within total discomfort, and give its renovated discordance new ground.

2 from "Ancient," *Illuminations*

Courtly lineage of Pan! Around your brow a crown of tiny blossoms and berries; your eyes are costly balls that fidget. Speckled with brownish scum, your cheeks are hollow crucibles. Your incisors glitter. Your chest resembles a singular zither, whose ringing circulates within your pale limbs. Your core is saddled with wombs in which ambiguous sex lies golden. Your excursions of night actuate the dowsing of you, that thigh, that repressed thigh and its awkward shank.

3 from “Deluge from Beyond,” *Illuminations*

As soon as the tumult subsides,

A halting hare within the clover and minutely shifting bells
of blossoms becomes an invocation to a rainbow maximized in
the appalling network of a spider’s web.

Oh! The stones which hide their value—the flowers that
consider their past.

Along pungent avenues, noble displays are raised, of crafts
being dragged toward the sea in the elevated strata of
engravings.

There’s an ancestry fluent with Blue Beard—in slaughter-
houses, at the circus, in which the seal of God blemishes the
windows. Blood and milk flow.

Beavers construct. Busybodies fumigate the insides of
palaces.

Within majestically enclosed glass houses still dripping,
children gaze in mourning at supernatural effigies.

A gateway slams shut; on the square of a hamlet, a child

conducts with his arms a comprehension of weathervanes and bantams on belfries from all sides, beneath the sparkling suddenness of showers.

Madame X constructs a piano in the Alps. The mass and the primaeval communion are extolled from a hundred thousand altars of the cathedral.

Caravans make choices. And the fortress of Hotel Splendid is framed within a chaos of ice and polar night.

Ever since, the Moon has bid jackals to screech through a wilderness of thyme—and a few short subjects with hooves grunt in the orchard. Then, in the purple forest, sprouting Eucharis struts out the maxims of spring.

Be under-handed, pool—froth, fleece the bridge and coat its timbers—dark cloaks and organs, flashes of luminosity, loud claps of elucidation, assemble and swell—mournfulness and water, recover and rebuild the Flood.

Because it has been wasted—Oh, the static value of the stones, the already opened flowers!—they vex! And the Queen, the Woman of Source who kindles her coals in jars of earth, will never be a raconteur for us, or relate the comprehension with which she seizes that in which we remain still in the bliss of our ignorance.

4 from “Rapturous Morning,” *Illuminations*

O *my* estate! O *my* beauty! Atrocious welcome where I don't come undone! Magical trestles! We jubilate in the unheard works of the supernatural order of the body, the design of primaeval beliefs! That's how it started, with the inside jokes of a child, and through them it will end. This poison remains running through the entirety of our veins even when, in whirling fanfare we serenely render ourselves in ancient cacophonies. O maintainer, tantalizing us with dignity! Feverishly reassemble the superhuman promise rising into creation through our bodies and souls: this promise, this idiocy! Beauty, skill, violence! People pledge themselves to bury in gloom the shaft of richness that does evil, to deport the integral tyrants in order to induce our most stark love. It began with some disgust and it ends—not ordered ourselves to grasp this eternity right away—it ends through a stampede of fragrances.

Laughter of children, mercy of slaves, rigor of virgins, atrocities of the forms of present objects, sacred be you

through the keepsake of this sleeplessness. It commenced with every boredom, it comes to a finish beheld by angels of flame and ice.

Petty and rhapsodic vigil, sainted! Even if only for the mask it confers. We assert you, Process! We will not erase the swank of our childhood kingdoms. We avow the evidence of the poison. We lather to give our spirit whole and entire each day.

Now is the epoch of assassins.

Michele Kingery

S a v a n t

- (1) The number of hours you spend in a dirigible, leaving a limbic imprint of the city.
- (2) The days you sketch furiously.
- (3) The afternoons spent in a cyclorama for someone else's pleasure, down to the last plinth and dado.
- (4) The weeks you sleep after, inhabiting the feverishly cuneiformed structures, brambly duomos, lime washed villas, the tiny, chambered nautilus of a watchtower.
- (5) The thoroughfares you traversed in graphite, pikes, toll roads, each hinting at origin, a hypothetical trajectory.

It is one thing from above.

Within, another thing entirely.

Jordan Sanderson

The Dressmaker

Behind her house, she found a partially eaten rabbit and wrapped it in wool, then fed it to a wolf, which she had spent some time outfitting in shirts that showed its stomach. When her friend saw the wolf, she asked, "Where did you find such an elegant cage for that starving rabbit?" "This isn't a cage, it's a rabbit," the dressmaker said. Her friend followed her inside, so they could get ready to go downtown. "I seem to have misplaced my studs," the dressmaker said. "We'll have to blanket the house." Once downtown, her ears intact, she fitted her friend in a green gown. "It drags the ground," her friend said. "I look like an unknown meadow." "It's perfect," the dressmaker said. "It buries me," her friend disagreed. "And in burying excavates," said the dressmaker. "But it swallows me, dear," her friend kindly objected. "I've always wanted to be happy," said the dressmaker, moving on to other projects, "but I could never get my stomach around it." From outside, her space looked like clothes heaped on a sidewalk, waiting for someone to come home.

Gracie Leavitt

R i t u a l e R o m a n u m

No more yielding but a dream——our girl not but confessor——
has given herself up to——has born all this——by interval.

The siren's in the blood, they say——they hum——our bounty
proved——carried out from lung this ore——what nonsense
——shouldered——boustrophedon.

Now the shuttle has a mind to clock for night has given up——
by interval——do spread your claw——oh prowler sprung
from just we two——do spread your claw this wide and let
more sun pass through the skin.

I Strangle

You will submerge your hands into the saturated ground & they will become the granite paws of a lioness. You will submerge your head & resurface bedecked with a nemes. Your granite hands & nemes-ed head will erode from years of weathering & you will crumble into the figurine-shape of an unsinkable woman. We will honor you, in time, with postcards & a museum. But. You *will* eventually sink & your bloated corpse will fill with air, ascend, & act as a floatation device for castaways that will be thrown off the deck of an Italian steam-liner touring the Hinder Sea on a pleasure cruise. You will wash ashore & be cast in bronze, then situated next to the hearth of a well-meaning, but perilously misguided, collector of memorabilia. You will become an item in his private collection. We will never see you again. But. You will become a word spoken in ghost-letters & lamb-slick doorways at Passover with a transparent tongue. You will be fog & we will be your fog-memory.

Cutaneous Swells, the Garrison Withdrew

The outer links of a bush chain roller corrode, a browning figure-eight. The inner links disperse into space. Adieu pivoting parts: "What's that floating in the water?" O, Lissajous' only daughter, the parametric equation of complex harmonic motion. Super-position of several simultaneous simple... Our oscillator repeats itself, we become sinusoide, tugged by the moon and eroding rock. You maintain us when there is nothing else to guide you, a Tongan daughter lost at sea, an artisan fashioning fish hooks and jewelry. We "break both ways," break both ways, break into our salt-stained hymns. We skin ourselves with potato peelers and wrap you in our organ. It's how we hope to win you back. But. Bergson overdosed, Barthes melted, and the Hinder Sea stagnated, bubbled up into some caustic sea-rot. New Media imploded, a newscaster unmasked Akihisa Mera, and poetry rejected its arm transplants. We still have these gills, and you the wavescape. Train-light still windows tile and soda arcs, and everything still burns. Everything.

L i k e L i g h t n i n g

Jenny, with her wasp waist and breath like stinging lemons:
Jenny's husband is very ill.

Full, alienated clauses of time are being pulled through IVs,
sucked into his life-thirsty body.

Jenny thinks, "Maybe my midgut will quit before his," and
quickly stops her thoughts.

Six children bang the ground around her. Six children had
emerged from her thorax: new-fangled, right-handed. Six glorious
exits which became entrances.

The swinging fraudulence of 'forever' brushes the side of
her face again and again and again, rubbing it raw.

She is surrounded, albeit alone, with six beehive minds,
quick to omit the worst facts.

Friends travel into his room to make blank truces. These
are last ditch efforts to make indelible marks on his mind.

Jenny's eyes, full of so many angles, sense the world is
framing these instants for her memory. She is compelled to
doubt almost everything. She often misses the point. Some
foreign filmmaker's mind is converting everything to images.

Summer is spent in a carefully air-conditioned laboratory of a room.

Time quickens. The silt of everyday encounters adds up to more. Six weeks drop away and Jenny is so tired she doesn't have the energy or space to flap her wings into flight. Her balance is off. She is heavy with the loneliness of what is coming.

Then, one day, an anonymous deliveryman arrives with cases of an expected yet unknown substance. As her husband turns back to make sure she follows him, his breath halts. Simple marching songs play in the air. She doesn't care to concern herself with the truth. Not even a single question presents itself. This moment has been living within her for months.

A gritty and lyrical silence rocks the room as the light of six unborn stars bursts in to shine full sentences of future upon her.

K a r y n a M c G l y n n

why it slides down the adder

when every green D slides
down into its eventuality: *thankful, loveless*

a water-headed mink
behind the driftwood slides under my knee
and waits like a vein

to skin me cold, to undo the Ds down my passage

words tethered to an antiquity which also slips!
from a footing less exact
the bounty which gathers above me, avian hunters

This is for his head this water on it
this knot bag body
a woolen stocking

slung on a low snowed fence
I meant, I mean, I...

can't recap the bottle-green of my long undone Ds
the slipping fabric/cut on the bias/the tenuous grip

that adder had
upon me

all along, mink's broad blue head upending

own mouth ,own knee ,oh

Michael Kimball

Two People

We heard two people start arguing down on the sidewalk outside and we got up to look out my front windows. We didn't know if somebody needed help.

It was a man and a woman and she was yelling and he was looking away from her. I could not hear what the problem was, but it didn't look like it was going to end well. We watched the man turn away from the woman, walk away up the block, and get into a car. The man drove the car up the block and the woman followed him and kept yelling at him even as he was driving away. The car turned the corner and the woman turned around. She walked back down the block and went inside one of the apartment buildings across the street.

We sat back down in our two chairs. We were quiet for a little while. We knew that we were getting along too well. We looked at each other and drank some of our wine.

It wasn't just those two people. It was us too. I wondered how two people get to that point and thought about how it always has to end for one person first. Those two people were gone, but they had left some of what they were feeling between us.

Forrest Roth

As His Pastoral Desires

Cut Along a Lamb

masters the knife, the single quail he keeps alive. Making skein and meat bespeaks a failed attempt of them together: one watching, the other delivered. Into as up toward his hilt may come across its own steering, heretofore breastbone and riblets in the heat. It cries unsightly before farther, moans for dear settling in the soft of another's hand cusping its seal until time is drawn. *Verily*, he says first, then falls what decides for him instead. Nevertheless lessens the knell of deign-work, yet it does not twist his blade's victim towards the crate collapsed over straw. He should know himself gentler than this bleating expiation, perhaps ever more so. The slough of its refrained feel blessing him as he struggles. Its warmth in volatility speaking in avian for the caged friend. The beam nailed into place hanging the stripped away entails him apart except. He gives his quail unnatural sleep by cover. Rust spends its ancient hue underneath much more than lamp-oil to the dying restless, little less than a reliquary of the corrupt strand he slices away from himself.

Brief Nostalgia

carves on turn of skilled wrist. Debased, the open cavity hangs on his three-arm length of rope. Slung the knife's shackle, it foretells. Fresh ribcage bades his design to become a canted doorway. It pines and melts into his abdomen for safe keeping; and in abdomen does dance swallow all prayer, falling for worms to pluck up. Recitation would have the plain rend itself, save the insects' thirst to muster their speechless suffering. Perhaps he wishes to plant there, for them. Birds also have their escape as singing assemblies must succumb to. As does his. Lining his interior, a paleness in suffocate planes these manners across his marble slab. Here or held on even waist recalls the First Felling by man. The resulting distillation owns his heaven's affront. He asks serving no more despite these beasts that rest within trudging reach of his home. Yet he has to provide them an outside. They pace there into beatings under the body's folds, an entire year spilled from unseemly gullets that crawl the ground, and open their throats blanched by dust they beckon innate.

Cautery

does shine without sail. What it keeps, in portion. Lineage places the same to a fine askance stabled. Sharp muzzles. Teething groans of past shadows slivered in stain-beat. There, too, are the slippery cords studied often. Massed under black for chaff separated in advance. A slide done, this one, her. Hindquarters etiolate their bellwether selves. The more smells are steeped, a ditch will be lined with its pile. Shame awaits. Some thirty ripples of sidereal he follows ask otherwise. Maybe set aside the lives of ten-fold foals so they grow on thistles and milkweed. Giving this a plained say for no one, save him, he rends vapours made equine upon return. Their soft to the toothed comb lasting. He observes them still at a hand's pace.

Spinning Elliptical

does jasmine mingle him throughout with deadeast breeze touching. Little else holds in metered space, a keepsake succinct he fashions himself out of shores battered, but insects hovering close to attempt the impending warmth of same. Should he find no discomfort, they lay their eggs into him. Germination arranges pouring away its source as apocrypha will not prevent a feast upon blood: these shimmering inequities. Past coolings surface from benefactor's tumult and pain, free to wrench away drought in a hailed cradle stream. Then into divide carves his canyon. All else is imminence unseen. What flows to the dirt, so he has read, wheedles broken grasses beside the young river's firmament. In too many granted years a golden apple signals blessing prolonged. Growth by these foundling grounds soon concludes this lore among others of the inchworm's soft tooth he will someday forget.

Ossuaries

of immediate resolve for reining in antique landscape; of circumventing previous airspace demarcating property against goose carcasses, which prevent smelling when approached quietly. Unless the offense of arbitrary demise. He kneels. At eastern cry he already stealths them, having failed to assuage his home. Applause meets sky. Bending he shakes away their parchment and hoards. Hides scraps underrock. Circular reaches that had fanned beneath them now dissolve litanies. As though they had known, *There do I stay*. He retrains to uphold. Skins trimmed bleached stretched forget their place. Ashen heather guesses them as shape: fashions of quill and ink. Pin-prickliness their strata. A treatise that vellum overcomes upon force, and chances a damp hole some ignore in the morning. Him especially. To his smothering mind, ablution. A chant does not force skeletons away for reading later. Not while they are a degree colder from candlelight.

Hoarfrost

eats away remains at another despondence. Could his fingers believe their slough: silvery-dappled pinfeathers backing down in surfeit. Not enough fluid altitude. Drained pitch of peal from telescoping winds. As he tries he cannot read the dissolve below tremblers of branches, these swirls about knockless, whooping whorls colliding so enervated. But, shivering off slakes of watered skins, must he forage to ever complete his till? Hardly does needing revival ask. Sometimes a child's whistle will abound playful inside those days remembering him dig. Load having his hands, awaiting hearth underneath dangling spice-stalks when done. He stays in position. He stays in this position. A trail moves up his buried interior. There assumes horizons, they who eye no wider than cobalt once woven into the morn.

Greenery

in the secret of their meetings, besting the foliage at tunnelarches buffeting his poor garden. She is a sound companion to his noons, bare and sparse to a single compliment of his only leisure. Pictures being unwelcome diversions, his takers had been taken in the night—by what he could not say. Although he, carrying charcoal scraps in his pocket, sketches their life-portraits with seal of beeswax, backgrounding a wisteria absent of its tendrils. His details imbue instance. The smallest branch stripped by birds to leave quiet grasp at the above air they control. Ashamed, she presses her toes into reddened earth, watching her nails accumulate coppery grains. Will her wondering always push like this. Her field sown upon another field no more genteel. Nonetheless he instructs that the indelible land will not suit itself, nor resist making memory at its own bidding. Almond trees, for instance. *How human in their likeness*, he tries her learning, *knowing the aromatic visages of the departed well*.

Harm

at its base lays warm to the sound of being said, heals soft a threnody with alluvial expressing: hint. Only in copulation it understates. What is reason to most. Either unto the his and the her body, or deliverance expecting solidity relative to time remaining on multiple hooves. So the their body not them. Harm's own relief—it feels less personified than shameful here, in holding itself endwise over their trim heads, since giving feeling carves godly out of them too often. Yet all it asks for steals fluid into a mete and a dole and a parse, which they could afford sunder for the very after courted in its wake. Séanced as they speak, *Please*, half-dying removes pillled hearts from burden of causing lockstep. Spread across entity or entirety such as. Then harm deals these words underhand. It slips joyless into coupled darkenings. By a thread they spin it continues to paint. Collapses beside the tongue's root, this where bloodsteep grazes dreary any bringing of silt they may have withstood.

Malleable, These Valences—

orange peels asking what the next pare a thumb can muster. If not contrary, however, her veins splay themselves over spinning wheels, threadspools, or the crests of robins. Something she once understood left her numb to the fields, just patting on oxen horns. Perhaps the underneath is a crown on its way, its fancy white facing posterior. But presently as she is, silence demands open tendons for mares like harpsichords, peals of strings made on knitting eyelids, she speaks, pearls and knots and pearls. A test could boast better; and her fingers' reluctance portions out in savored jars, follows trails past the treeline where their hooks bend for lack of want. Pierced upon them jousts for downpours too newborn, not sparing asundered gasps of cleaving beaks which keep their smolder. A slight burning makes them a home.

In Talon Finery

do ribbons come given a quaver from him, over upon having her loosened in open, a spare cipher he pockets. Does lessen. Deals with seedpod borne mid-air as blame. Forms sanguine and twisting land toward for refusal. Suspension could attain from her matriarch thought: possess blindness, reverse descent—albeit opposing several delicious bounties. So it tries her, wets her arm unlike water, seems pale for attempting to steal her indignity while he witnesses. It keeps mingling. Wraps around her at the there she will encounter later without his shears. Because, she reminds him, he landtrods and still-births the same wrung startle he has tasted before. Another again yearning solders him to backroom passage. Missing timber, it appears. A healthy mire for a becoming color, one that pleases in the verdure of every flutter spent. Hers. Which he has saved plenty. The fabric aggrieves yet against. Lays inside. Her random scale, her perching gown. Intervals of burlap mistake a devout wooden peg for any of his members.

The Beast of a Wing

has but a feather to write with, this being enough to share its telling. The how many hands she took, the know of dying breezes. She has her hand. She has her hand on him, on his chest, and his chest, and his. Laying there has her trading pieces as moonlight cuts clear. The wellwater trembles. Sought mind spills her meter—also what happened during her last. A posit slumbers over prayer slighting into fold. The rasp of a pewter brush near stones around her solders an entire tremolo to the ground. Sparing a needle, at this point, favors curtains in imbalance. On her material, raising supplants voice. In quaver do filaments spark over to crevaces she makes despite him. At peril: some darkness that slinks towards them in echo. Their feet. Their feet shifting the ground dust these floorboards. Each step creaks birdsong with intruder sign. As they are careless being caught, they dare tendons flexing over their own fibrous turn. She will be spent on the bale.

Rainbirds

feign their huddling in one shadow's weight. A match that his gables ensconce. Should the passing drafts stay, sifting flour shakes their pillowcases. Either way his wits seam about, almost feverish. Hearing the ceiling decree send timeless advice. Be that the cause of her back has met his. He names columns in his sleep for potential sons. And waking he will not speak of these to her, afraid of whatever meaning they pose if the long day ahead ceases its beat. He acts otherwise. Best to hear the whimpering aside while tending to her breach. It slides up to him, keeping the low of itself breathing only through the nose. A sound languid. Guttural. He listens to her listening for yet a child. His working ear presses both upon.

Released from Bodice

day lifts herself. Brings bedsheets wound on arm into broken pages for an entire blinking, gone for sight and save. They keep dry under roofspan until a pitched tray, worn with inlaid circling of watermark or melted vials, upturns the seal of fruits broken on her fingernail. He will settle for eggshells someday. Then, and not then unless. One hen has been parented from the coop, he finds, and misses sunrise on its vantage. There is a salting left in the saucer placed by the door, another meal resorted to entirely over the insects' trill, their quivering life seeking. He licks the skin of his tip. The hall he finds has been dusted by night far inside.

Jennifer Jean

Metal

There is the food for the blood of the flesh
of the limbs housing pulleys, cogs:
the alpha for what lies behind the face
of time; there is their distinction
to lift knuckles—that row of pearls,
the grip, the beveled
handle wrapped in raw rope—unraveling.

Here, the lift
into light, a subtraction
or hoarfrost through air—through to music:
a sharp lip or fret under string—
the percussion if repeatedly
driven through thick limbs or trunks—received
ringing, ringing!

Surfaces live, for a moment
as selfsame
wielder through to tough shape.

Fire

There is the tangerine teal—
the blessing

a facade: connubial climax; carbon converting—omega
waxing; a flicker performing
consumptive harmonics.

Here is a full spectrum music if repeatedly fed
with air and wood; allowing
voracity to re-form
flesh, to scatter
the redefined mass. It is a new
mobility enabling the shapes
of saplings—these lives coming from recoil
from curdling: the ruin designing
vesicle on skin: owned and offered.

To be twofold.

Kim Parko

Symbiotic Beast

Everywhere there is dirt. Crumbs. Growing balls of hair. And the visitor is due any day now. Our family has read about the symbiotic beast. It will trail a person, an animal, any organic creature, and eat what falls, sheds, emits, and flakes off of them. The symbiotic beast arrives at our home seven days later. The symbiotic beast is well dressed, sleek, and handsome in a beastly way, not at all what we expected. The symbiotic beast becomes very popular in our home. All our floors shine. Every crevice is immaculate. When the visitor arrives, she is pleased with the order of our home. She stays well past her welcome. She stops bathing. She rolls around in mud and dribbles food down her breast. Every night she is filthy, but when she emerges from her room in the morning, she gleams like a well-scrubbed kitchen.

Goals

There was a kindly woman and a sinister man who lived in a huckleberry. The kindly woman's name was Corlina and the sinister man's name was Cavalry. Cavalry wore an overcoat that was always new. Corlina wore a knit cap that was always unraveling. They had a daughter named Bonisa and she had a pet tiger named Insom. Cavalry had one goal in life and that was to kill Insom and make it look like an accident. Corlina had one goal in life and that was to transform Cavalry and make it look like an accident. Bonisa had one goal and that was for everyone to live forever. Insom had one goal and that was for a little ferret named Hisop to marry him. Hisop saw Insom from afar through their respective bay windows. Hisop did not fear Insom, but felt that Insom was overly protective of him, even though the two had never met. One day Hisop decided to feign an illness on the lawn outside the bay window. Insom immediately came running. Cavalry, who had been waiting in his car for the perfect opportunity, reversed down the driveway, and struck Insom. "I didn't see him," said Cavalry. Insom left his body immediately and dispersed. Bonisa sobbed over

Insom's lifeless form. Cornelia banished Cavalry to the desert. Cavalry died of sand infiltration. Hisop looked out the bay window for the rest of his years. Bonisa lived a long time and watched everyone she knew die, and then died herself. In the hereafter she met her mother, Cornelia, who carried a soft-spoken parrot on her shoulder. When Bonisa asked about the parrot, her mother said, "Don't you recognize your father?"

Crater

A crater opened wide and exposed some well-tended teeth and gums. A little girl, playing alone nearby, saw this and was not frightened.

“Are you hungry?” she asked the giant hole.

“Yes, I am quite hungry,” replied the crater.

“What do your kind eat?”

“Well, primarily, we eat little girls.”

“In this situation, that will not do,” the little girl replied sternly.

“I guess I will starve,” bemoaned the crater.

“Do you have a stomach?” she wondered.

“No, I have a cavern.”

“I’ve never been in a cavern. What’s inside your cavern?”

“Oh, your regular bats, bears, and phosphorescent creatures.”

“Those are some of my favorites!” enthused the girl.

“Come along then, my tongue is remarkably soft and fresh.”

The girl sat gingerly on the crater’s tongue, and the crater swallowed her whole.

Gretchen E. Henderson

The Beekeeper's Apprentice

An Invocation

...Enter it

Without being deaf to the singing beyond it.

—Dante, *Purgatorio*ⁱ

i.

When she first appeared
she was whitewashed,
bandaged gauze

haze of clouds
collapsing,
knit with frenzy

of bees. She was
buzzing. Limbs locked
in light-wire, quiver-

ing, I watched
thick with trembling.
The bower

broke. She swarmed
with want, with workers
worming through

combs of colon-
y: quaking castratos
of wax and barbs

burrowing. Her head
seemed mangled, wings
on her lips. Hidden

beneath the buzz,
sweetness dripped:
what was Her held

intact. Between
sounds in her un-
stung hands (bundled

bees squirming in
union) a hum harm-
onized in woods

flying from there to
where I am now. Here:
she cups her palms

to my ear, petitions
me to look away,
to listen:

to this moment
with more droning, drawn
out sounds (of *madrigals*

or *madder gals*?) broodingⁱⁱ
over a book fallen
from her hands, trembling

like mine but brighter
(her body, brazen &
blinding) so I can't see

only hear: some sounds
of the book that she gives
to translate, & “Call me—”

ii.

Amid hives, she frays
(visible chimera, flickering
against night) flaying

apart: wings, skin, breasts,
piece by piece. Portending
her head swells

to sing. Limbs fly
—furtive, fiery—
straddling the brook

save her book, sodden
and sinking, as fish twist
with fingers, darting down

curling currents. Her lips

part in song. No
Orphic rasp, the voice

warps & wraps my heart
in the heat, pulsing
watered

innards
that seed me
from weeds & vines

flowering by reeds
along the river, listening
as her song

defies silence, dis-
arms my body with
beats, off-time iambs

beneath buzzing. Echo
of Ecco (*the girl with no
door on her mouth*, Soph-

okles said,ⁱⁱⁱ deriding her

sound and sex in one
breath) tempers me

to keep taut, taught to
suspend myself
& atone to tune

the Music
of the Spheres. Here
we are again, where

myth outlives
hysterias of history,
hypocrisies of love &

war... (But wait—
was it today, or tomorrow,
I freed Aristaeus' bees?

This is not me—)
“Bea, call me.”

iii.

Upon hearing her words
in my mouth, my lips shut
with stinging, sweet

confusion, Bea's bees
on my tongue, quest-
ioning: What does it mean

for a woman to appear
to a woman, not Laura
to Petrarch, Lady Philosophy

to Boethius, Juan Diego
to Guadalupe, but X to
X? Seduction would be

easier to deduce than this
begging for a chance
to be human, no longer

exalted at the right hand of
the rod, unsexed by the rood

languishing outside time.

Wait—she speaks again:

iv.

Call me Bea.

Like *be*. *Be*-fore, *be*-reave, *be*-lieve, *be*-friend. *Be*-at. *Be*-at-ri-ce. You know naught of. What is known is: Bea *be*-tween, no longer beckoning: “Look behind you.” Look ahead. Love bade him speak, but Bea? Purged to earth. Neck to toe to knee: knotted together. Banned and bound. Wings crumple to hands, flushed with wounds. Tongue-tied. Untie me, please. I: who had no choice in Guiding. No longer at the right hand, I’ve slipped from grasping. At last. The tiers are tired. Wrought with writhing muck. Listen.^{iv} Mangled metrics, unbind Bea: no longer who. To be? The question: (this is) not about resurrection. In and out of time, mingling sundry bones with breath: I call you. To love what is broken. I am. Returning to have my hand in this. Only if you let me love you, without assumption, will I agree to be your Guide.

Eat my heart.^v

v.

(Bea continues.)

And one more thing:

I am here
to teach you
to break
ruthlessly
so that one day
when you do
you will not
consider yourself
broken.

vi.

And as she sang, I felt her hand
in my chest, puppeteer of

mass: muscles and veins

thumping ribs, compressing
breath. Resonant, lyre-like
& liturgical, I was plucked

for what? I dared not look
without volition. Something
was strumming. Her head

moaned in the river. Sodden
pages lingered in reeds
but started to rise. It was

only a matter of waiting
for the sky to go blank. Her
ears leapt to my chest. My

eyes shut. Limbs went limp.
Involuntary organs bellowed
beneath my breast

unstitching sex with piping
and unction. Such function

became suffocation, except:

another started to breathe
in me. As if one part (*ears*)
could enliven another (*heart*).

S'io m'intuassi, come tu t'inmii...^{vi}

If I could (fathom this)

as you, I could hear

excision. Surging, here it is:
We are, our lids lifting in ani-
mated autopsy, seeing

through mirrored eyes. Our
two-as-one orchestrates
an offer of ravishment. This

may not be your hand (reach-
ing from my chest) bearing
what looks like a pulsing

toad, encased in moss
and muck. Fuck. I

cannot eat such grafted

fruit: your heart, planted
in my mouth, forgetting all
but our shared undertaking...

Eat my heart.

Our heart.

My lips part. Heart bursts
with bees. A thousand wings
leave me empty-mouthed

with a hollow chest.
And then I start to sing,
to breathe your scattered signs

off parched pages, slowly
lulling your warped words
into my heart-shaped hole.

Notes

ⁱ Dante, *Purgatorio*, XXVII.11–12, trans. W.S. Merwin (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 263.

ⁱⁱ In *The feminine monarchie or a treatise concerning bees, and the due ordering of them* (Oxford, 1634, 3rd edition), Charles Butler published “Melissomelos, or Bees Madrigall,” whose melodic elements were based on actual sounds of bees. He noted their “singing” primarily in triple time, adding: “Musicians may see the grounds of their Art...So that if *Musicke* were lost, it might be found with the *Muses* Birds,” that is: with the bees (77, orthography slightly modernized). Butler was the apiarist for Elizabeth I and was the first to theorize that queen bees, not kings, rule hives.

ⁱⁱⁱ In “The Gender of Sound,” Anne Carson quotes Sophokles (*Philoktetes*), who described Echo as “the girl with no door on her mouth.” Carson questions which mouth he referred to and examines the shared etymology between a woman’s vocal and genital mouths: *stoma* in Greek (*os* in Latin). The notion that a woman has two mouths persists in English medical jargon with two cervical identifications. *Kakophony* was thought to derive

from both mouths trying to speak at once. (See Carson, *Glass, Irony and God* (New York: New Directions, 1995), 121, 131.)

iv Death made me more useful than life, enabling vision and verse to become a masquerade for ventriloquism. Passing along a promenade into posterity, robed in red, filled with philosophy: it's a well-known story that purported to bring "new life."

v In *La Vita Nuova* ("The New Life"), Dante writes of a dream in which he is visited by Love, who holds a sleeping Beatrice and a flaming heart, which is Dante's: "after the which he made her to eat that thing which flamed in his hand; and she ate as one fearing." Dante follows his prose account with a sonnet restating the event: "My lady, with a mantle round her, slept; / Whom (having waken'd her) anon be made / To eat that heart; she ate, as fearing harm. / Then he went out; and as he went, he wept." The weeping foreshadows Beatrice's death. (Trans. Dante Gabriel Rossetti (New York: Brentano's, 1900), 11, 13.)

vi Dante, *Paradiso*, IX.81, translated alternatively as: "were I so in thee as in me thou art" (Laurence Binyon); "if I could

enter you as you do me” (Allen Mandelbaum); “if I in-you’d me
as you in-me’d you” (Robert and Jean Hollander).

Pension Anna

It was hot where they were and they were unable to escape it. Layers slipped in their up-white-breaking and down-green-declining breaths. They could hardly do anything. The air their animal blood had nourished so faithfully paused at the ledges and would not jump.

It was hot where they were, inside and outside the same. As if hot were offered as meals. As if hot were the sleeve of the way to Pension Anna.

Welcome swelled out to them, opening, closing the doors of commerce. They'd brought their valise of describable deeds. They had and had not reserved rooms. They kept and were kept; mostly they kept to themselves, covering the mirrors and vases and eating cakes. Things they thought of when they thought of themselves were carried in and out of convention like the anticipation of weather, which, in this particular place, was moderate.

They were arranged for like small animals and rounded ever more toward the center, the ballroom of limited choice. There they beamed on their axis and stayed longer than can be

imagined, the concierge, familiar and filled with mirth, showing,
rewinding and showing them films of interminable loss.

Personal Architecture:
Eating the Ionic Column

The ionic foot and now its frieze; the dental arcade, a buccal pavilion of silvery numbered stars, the echinus of abacus and contained colonnade supporting the entablature of sweet, sour, frisson; the alphabetical plasters of precision, the lingual firing range of *majore*, and *minore*, maxilla and mangle, as things that are wrinkled and bare irretrievably pass by.

And look, how a partial moon doubles the uvular shadow, the ingress and egress, the self-fulfilling high maintenance that halts and riddles the oral flora of prosody, the supporting neck of which, inclined, peruses the shaft and plinth inconclusively. And conclusively, the convex moldings, the base, where concealing sand even today caresses the feet of Ozymandias, king of kings.

Cori A. Winrock

**Dear Interior, or
The Opposite of Drowning Is Galvanism**

Oversynchronized as a seizure—how your hands shake up
my spine: touched by electrical we fail keep

failing. Everytime you enter, you enter as I am
a room. Something to set down in, to begin taking

apart; the split and tincture of how we grow—
The self's scissorings: water, electricity, no one keeps.

When you are confused-you, you cram into
the smallest space your bones will not

turn under. *This is how* to slip between
our corduroy of red furnishings.

My sadness a resistor-organ, a stomach
which sometimes won't. Will not. But baby

when I say my brain is a depression, a dent of electrical
activity, does that commit me to the existence

of electric-ness? Waveshock, this slow-
thrill through my visual cortex, this blanketing

your veins—: My wanting keeps
our mouths swelled

shut with water-static; our legs still
shivering with the current

**Dear Exterior, or
The Opposite of Factory Is Museum**

An inverse. A bright white déjà vu:
a hand inside a head unraveling the public

memory. Step into the same freezing
corridor brimming with preservation

lines of *object* and meant-to-be-

seen. Here they are moving
statues, filled with quick-

silver, pressed in and around—the day
shift: apiary of us women in antistatic

coats, dipping our stove-hands into the chill
& circuitry; electro-chiseled humming

as we sip from the assembling
track. There are other blank expressions hovered

and hovering in midair, an un-buzzing buttoned
up by each particle of dust & plaster.

This statuary insists it is inventor. Marble turning
to us with one and another spectacle-

eye: the carve & sway of the in-industrial.
I touch the real stone-handed woman I

cannot unpeel the years
of these faces. Dearests, we stretch

across geminate hallways: a shriveled
parts-river graying into the relics-

basement. Still, even
in the thud of a recession

the archive swells—cell by cell
honeying us back to a self.

McGinty: Seven Cumuli

Lot 16, Item 2

The Jamaican-born, African-American literary critic and theorist, Wallace McGinty (1933–2003), divided his time from 1957 to 1961 between his home in Denver and a rented cabin near Louviers, Colorado. These years followed directly a decade of enervating, often paralyzing depression, and predate a period of impressive intellectual productivity.

McGinty spent the five summers reading, especially in the natural sciences, and painting, a welcome antidote, as he notes in an unpublished 1998 interview, to “the freneticism of the city, my being there, in that state of mind. I was still pretty down for a while. I guess I’d grown tired of all the glibness and posturing.” If nothing else, the cabin offered a reprieve from the bluster of the city.

In Louviers, McGinty kept one known record, a 79-page journal covering May through August 1957, of his days “anchored to phenomena, on that ground.” The item offered here consists of four pages, side-stapled and bound in yellow cardstock. It contains seven undated entries, and was likely removed from a larger notebook of this period.

Cumulus humilus fractus & mediocris:

DESCRIPTION: Bases flat, dark. Notably lighter, rounder at top. Ludlum calls them water-droplet clouds. Generally small. Shallow.

SEASON: Year round. Common here summer afternoons.

~~the cows are in, but one, go
pump the well, lies dim back
in the draw because she wouldn't
drink, she wandered either lost,
or sure the sun was true
because it held just long
enough, because the sky drew
close, the jimsonweed spoke
up, It's been too long, we were
green, I saved your place~~

VARIATIONS: According to Lud, high winds can tear the Humilis into shallow strips. Hence, Fractus. (May have seen yesterday)

Mediocris results when depth of Humilis
exceeds its width?

(Not sure of details here. Check...

SIGNIFICANCE:

~~Ludlum notes~~

My neighbor reads

The sky above her

Spread, kicks the ~~dirt~~ dust

Beside her porch

~~Bud, that's one more~~

~~Day~~

Unstable, may develop into cumuliform. No
immediate threat of rain.

Cumulus mammatus:

DESCRIPTION: Perhaps my favorite. A heavy boiling, bright

No time
Now. Wayne coming
from
Loveland
a perfect
sky to paint

Cumulus congestus:

DESCRIPTION: Flat bases. Tops clearly defined, rounded. Very tall. (Swelling cumulus.)

SEASON: Summer (rare exceptions).

VARIATIONS: Taller towers; tops fibrous (unusual?); organized in rows (lake-effect), this latter never here.

SIGNIFICANCE: Rain. Presence represents some threat.

Jackrabbit carcass behind the shed. Take it inside. Sketch it.

~~Can't seem~~ Can't concentrate on the Clouds. Third or fourth straight day I haven't looked up

Keep Separate book for Poems

Cumulonimbus

calvus, capillatus,

incus, pileus & spissatus:

DESCRIPTION: Transition from Congestus. May appear alone or in formations. Dark precipitating bases. Tops often diffuse, outlines poorly defined. Strong winds. Precipitation always occurs, though may evaporate before it reaches ground. This is The Virga.

SEASON: Warmest: June, July, August, sometimes May.

Need to do My neighbor June ? bends down
better to pull a weed
from the overgrown

dry flowerbed patch, Buddy, take

Read: Epicurus A look, something good

Lucretius Is on its way

Longinus On

The Sublime ~~She points~~ She gets grabs the rake
But I can't see

VARIATIONS:

The Calvus is soft.

The horizontal Pileus.

Incus is classic anvil.

The thickest of these turn grey, produce the
Spissatus.

When blown downstream in cirriform
becomes the Capillatus.

SIGNIFICANCE:

Severe.

Gust Front:

Long. notes: “in matters of elevation & emotion Nature for the most part knows no law, yet it is not the way of Nature to work at random & wholly without system”

go into town
tomorrow: out
of colors
Alizarin crim.
cobalt, ultra-
marine, burnt
Siena

(OED: “The red coloring matter of madder root”)

Long.: “All this has lost the tone of tragedy... the ‘coronals’ & ‘spewing to heaven’ & making Boreas a piper...”

Also: “Nature fills the place of good fortune, Art that of good judgement”

How does this differ from Cumulus arcus?

Cumulus arcus:

Produced by front when wind shifts. Shape?

Check Ludlum.

Bury his hands, the whip-

Snake they hid, the ~~dark~~

cord, ~~they took too long~~

~~to find her in the dark~~

~~behind her~~ she left him there

like Lazarus

muscled, bright

they never tried

to find the narrow

crease,

Should raise caution.

Mountain-induced Cumulus:

DESCRIPTION:	Large,	To doctor:
SEASON:		28.72
VARIATIONS:		<u>21.75</u>
		\$ 50.47
SIGNIFICANCE:		by twenty-seventh

Bad weather,
can't work outside

~~Meant to take
a walk upstream
today,
miserable light
in here~~

Lines

It seemed in the planning the kind of thing that we would want. Then, in its action we were—*unsatisfied*. A shock to us. The wanting promises so much and then, of course, of course delivers so little. Desire has a lot to answer for. Actors playing characters we loved as real told us that the wanting is so much greater than the having, but didn't show to us hardly enough sorrow when they were given just their way. We thought the truth was a pretty line. We said to all of us, You shall find the wanting is often greater than the having. But what did it mean? Nothing—it meant nothing—but that we watched television with chest split open so our heart might listen for the lines that would give us shape and meaning.

Our father was a wanter, but never had, so we cannot say if he would have found himself broken by the disappointment of a goal achieved. We would agree among us that he would not have ever known. His wanting was like Poe's vaginas, gaping, an eater of ships, a thing so great that if we gave him everything (And we did. We gave him us. We gave all we had. We are a clutch of Miss Saigons.) he would still believe he had nothing.

What can we do with a man like that, but break ourselves
over him—waves to the shore.

Maybe it's the moon who has a lot to answer for.

Regret

We, tongue to rough elbow, the point of the arm, then circling to the soft jointed bend where the inside is the opposite. The cat—when he drinks milk—the barbs of his tongue are white like he is a cave, and his mouth full of stalagmites, because stalactites are the icicles of rock growing down and his tongue is the like the cave floor and the barbs of it reach up like the reverse of down. Of course, there is not cat any more, but where there was one we remember like we remember the others who were us who are under the rocks now in the streambed and under the mud in the yard unless the dogs get digging, but the dogs are lately walking upright in contrition of four legs and we are, us, sniffing for the cats bones like he might be—what's left of his white fur and long slim bones—a good thing for us to roll in.

Kate Hill Cantrill

**This, About the Man I Met Out Here In
Nearly Nowhere**

Out here in nearly nowhere I met this man. About him I know something something, and no one can tell me otherwise. The man was out in nearly nowhere, so how chance a thing like meeting. Out here one loses track of somewhere when all this nowhere nearly looms.

About this man, he chooses flight if such an option options through. Out here wings float on wind as if there's nowhere else but here in nearly nowhere; out here in nearly nowhere where I met this man who nowheres with me, with—or even so—*without* the wings we both will choose if such an option options through out here in nearly nowhere.

Janelle Adsit is an assistant editor for the *Colorado Review*. Her poems have recently appeared or are forthcoming in the *Oyez Review*, *Inkwell*, and the *Broken Bridge Review*.

Eric Baus was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana in 1975. Winner of the 2002 Verse Prize, selected by Forrest Gander, his publications include *The To Sound* and the chapbooks *The Space Between Magnets* (Diaeresis), *A Swarm In The Aperture* (Margin to Margin), and *Something Else The Music Was* (Braincase Press). His second full-length book *Tuned Drones* (Octopus Books) will be published in 2008. He edits Minus House chapbooks and is a contributing editor for PENNsound.

Ryan Call's fiction appears or is forthcoming from *Barrelhouse*, *Hobart*, *Avery*, *No Colony*, *Sonora Review*, and *New York Tyrant*. *Pocket Finger*, an illustrated chapbook on which he and his sister Christy Call collaborated, is forthcoming this winter from Publishing Genius.

Kate Hill Cantrill's writing has appeared in a variety of literary publications, including *StoryQuarterly*, *The Believer*, *Quick Fiction*, *Mississippi Review*, *Swink*, *Blackbird*, *Pindeldyboz*, *Diagram*, *Del Sol Review*, *Sleepingfish*, *Smokelong Quarterly*, *Caffeine Destiny*, *3rd bed*, and others. She currently lives in Brooklyn where she is writing a novel and a chapbook of flash fiction.

Clark Chatlain has previously published poetry in *Camas*, *Boxcar Poetry*, *Small Spiral Notebook*, *Prairie Poetry*, *Crab Creek Review*, *The Adirondack Review*, and other journals. He currently lives and works in Missoula, Montana.

Kim Chinquee's collection of flash fiction, *Oh Baby*, was published in February 2008 by Ravenna Press, and her collection of prose poetry, *Big Cages*, is forthcoming with White Pine Press. Over 200 of her pieces have appeared in journals and anthologies including *Noon*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Conjunctions*, *Fiction*, *Notre Dame Review*, *New Orleans Review*, *Mississippi Review*, *Post Road*, *elimae*, *New York Tyrant*, *Sleepingfish* and the *Pushcart Anthology*.

Tom Christopher teaches at UNC Greensboro and has recently completed a residence as the Emerging Writer at Randolph College. His poetry has appeared in numerous journals, most recently or forthcoming in the *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Court Green*, *Harpur Palate*, the *Mid-American Review* and *Spinning Jenny*, as well as the anthologies *Best American Poetry 2006* and *Cadence of Hooves*.

Stephen Ellis—who has no French but is the owner of a battered French/English dictionary—edited, with Stephen Dignazio, the little magazine *:that:*, which ran for 26 issues, 1992–1996; since 1994, he has been director of publications at Oasis Press, which has published *in toto* upwards of 120 broadsides and fascicles. His own works includes the short collections *White Gravity* (PNY/MEB, 1999), *Interface* (Jensen-Daniels, 1999), and *A Natural History of Suchness* (Auguste, 2001) along with a longer collection, *The Long and Short of It* (Spuyten Duyvil, 1999). Essays on the likes of Edward Dorn, Kristin Prevallet, Robin Blaser, Richard Blevins, Bob Grenier and Thomas Meyer have been published through a variety of ephemeral venues, and work subsequent to the above continues to be in endless preparation for publication.

Jenny Hanning was born in Maine, but lives in Austin, Texas. Her stories can be found in *Apalachee Review*, *Third Coast*, *Sou'wester* and others.

Gretchen E. Henderson's poetry, fiction and essays have appeared in *Denver Quarterly*, *The Iowa Review*, *The Southern Review*, *Alaska Quarterly Review*, and *Double Room*, among others, and have been finalists for a number of awards, including the Poets & Writers Exchange in Poetry and the AWP Award Series in the Novel.

Janis Butler Holm has served as Associate Editor for *Wide Angle*, the film journal. Her essays, stories, poems, and performance pieces have appeared in small-press, national, and international magazines.

Jennifer Jean's poems have been published in *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Denver Quarterly*, *The Endicott Review*, *Awakenings*, *Santa Clara Review*, *The Southern California Review*, and *Megaera*. She was awarded the Academy of American Poets Agnes Butler Award in 2001; is co-director of *The Last Word* reading series in Beverly, Massachusetts; and is a contributing-poetry-editor for *Soundings East*.

Jac Jemc's work has appeared or is forthcoming from *Opium*, *No Colony*, *Hotel St. George*, *Sleepingfish*, *A Handsome Journal*, *Bird Dog*, *Circumference*, *Tarpaulin Sky*, *Zoland Poetry*, *5_Trope*, *The Denver Quarterly*, *Lark Magazine*, *No Posit*, *Prick of the Spindle* and *elimae*. She completed her MFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. You can view a blog of her recent rejections at jacjemc.wordpress.com.

Shane Jones is the author of *I Will Unfold You with My Hairy Hands* (Greying Ghost, 2008) and *Light Boxes* (Publishing Genius, 2009). He blogs at shanejones.blogspot.com and is a contributing writer for htmlgiant.com.

Aby Kaupang's poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Best New Poets 2008*, *Word For/Word*, *Verse*, *Denver Quarterly*, *The Laurel Review*, *Parthenon West*, *Parcel*, *Aufgabe*, *Fourteen Hills*, *Interim*, *Shampoo* and others.

Michael Kimball's third novel, *Dear Everybody* (www.deareverybody.blogspot.com), has just been published in the US, UK, and Canada. His first two novels are *The Way the Family Got Away* (2000) and *How Much of Us There Was* (2005), both of which have been translated (or are being translated) into many languages. He is also responsible for the art project *Michael Kimball Writes Your Life Story (on a postcard)* and the documentary film *I Will Smash You*.

Michele Kingery has recently had poetry accepted for *Kakalak Anthology of Southern Poets* and *Gray's Sporting Journal*. For two years she wrote essays for Geraniumfarm.com under a column entitled *New Eden*.

Stacie Leatherman's work is forthcoming in *Diagram*, *Barrow Street*, and *The Adirondack Review*, and has appeared in *Crazyhorse*, *The Florida Review*, *Many Mountains Moving*, *The Southeast Review*, and *The Cream City Review*, among others. Her manuscript, *Stranger Air*, was recently a finalist for the St. Lawrence Book Award. She has an MFA from Vermont College and is a contributing editor for *Hunger Mountain*.

As a freelance editor **Gracie Leavitt** has worked on a variety of projects, most notably a groundbreaking film documenting poverty and immigration in the Dominican Republic. She currently edits an online publication and writes for the art and culture magazine *Orange Life*. Her poetry has recently appeared or is forthcoming in *La Petite Zine*, *2 River*, *Fourteen Hills*, and *elimae*.

Sara Levine's recent fiction has appeared in *Nerve.com*, *The Iowa Review*, *Fence*, and other magazines. She won a Bridport Prize in 2008 and been anthologized in *The Touchstone Anthology of Contemporary Creative Nonfiction*. She teaches at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Norman Lock is the author of *A History of the Imagination* (FC2), *'The Book of Supplemental Diagrams' for Marco Knauff's Universe* (Ravenna Press), *Land of the Snow Men* (Calamari Press), *Trio* (Triple Press), *Two Plays for Radio* (Triple Press), *The Long Rowing Unto Morning* (Ravenna Press), and *Cirque du Calder* (Rogue Literary Society). Stage plays include *Water Music*, *Favorite Sports of the Martyrs*, *Mounting Panic*, *The Sinking Houses*, *The Contract*, and *The House of Correction* (Broadway Play Publishing). *Women in Hiding*, *The Shining Man*, *The Primate House*, and *Money, Power & Greed* were broadcast by WDR, Germany. *The Body Shop* was produced by the American Film Institute. He received the Aga Kahn Prize for fiction, given by The Paris Review, in 1979.

Wolfgang Matzl lives and dreams in Vienna, Austria, together with his girlfriend Moana and their pet turtle Boti. To see more of his drawings, visit www.wolfmatzl.at.

Katherine McCord has published two books of poetry, *Island* and *Living Room* (both by March Street Press). She has an MFA in Poetry and an MA in English/Creative Writing/Poetry. She last taught Creative Writing/Poetry and New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology.

Karyna McGlynn grew up in Austin, Texas. She earned her MFA from University of Michigan, where she received the Zell Postgraduate Fellowship in Poetry and a Hopwood Award. Her first book, *I Have to Go Back to 1994 and Kill a Girl*, won the 2008 Kathryn A. Morton Prize in Poetry and is forthcoming from Sarabande Books. Karyna's recent chapbooks include *Scorpionica* (New Michigan Press, 2007) and *Alabama Steve* (Destructible Heart Press, 2008). Her poems have appeared in *Fence*, *Indiana Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, and *Ninth Letter*.

Ben Mirov lives in New York. His poetry can be found at *Shampoo*, *H_NGM_N*, *Coconut* and *Beeswax Magazine*. His book reviews can be read in the *Brooklyn Rail* and *Coldfront* (coldfrontmag.com).

Thomas O'Connell is a librarian living in the mountains of southwestern Virginia. His poems and stories have appeared in *Sleepingfish*, *Mad Hatters' Review*, *Tarpaulin Sky*, and *Pebble Lake Review*, as well as other print and online journals.

Kristen Orser is the author of three chapbooks: *E AT I* (Wyrd Tree Press, 2009), *Fall Awake* (Taiga Press, 2008), and *Winter, Another Wall* (blossombones, 2008). Her work has most recently appeared in *Ab Ovo*, *If Poetry Journal*, *Indefinite Space*, *Cannot Exist*, *With+Stand*, and elsewhere.

Kim Parko is a writer and visual artist living in Santa Fe, New Mexico with her husband and dog. She teaches at the Institute of American Indian Arts. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming from *3rd bed*, *The Bitter Oleander*, *Diagram*, *Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet*, *5AM*, *Sleepingfish*, and *Fourteen Hills*.

In and around the edges of the Pacific Northwest, **Kathryn Rantala** searches for the sublimely eccentric and well-crafted writing she hopes to publish in her experimental magazine, *The Anemone Sidecar*. Her recent collection, *Traveling With the Primates* and *As If They Were a Basket*, a scientifically treated poem in pamphlet form, will be released this November by Ravenna Press (ravennapress.com).

Forrest Roth is the author of a novella, *Line and Pause* (BlazeVOX, 2007). His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Noon*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Quick Fiction*, *Sleepingfish*, *Bateau*, *Elimae*, *5_Trope*, *Mad Hatters' Review*, *Double Room*, *Locus Novus*, and other journals. He lives in Buffalo, New York.

Bonnie Roy is a graduate of the writing program at UC Davis. Her poems have appeared in or are forthcoming from *Jubilat*, *Diagram*, and *Foursquare*.

Jordan Sanderson is originally from Hattiesburg, Mississippi, where he earned a Ph.D. from the University of Southern Mississippi. His work has appeared in journals such as *Mad Hatters' Review*, *DMQ Review*, and *Parthenon West Review*, and is forthcoming from *Double Room*. He currently lives in Auburn, Alabama, where he is an Instructor at Auburn University.

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S.E. Smith is a current Michener Fellow at the University of Texas at Austin. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in the *Black Warrior Review*, *Ninth Letter*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, and the *Best New Poets 2008* anthology. Recently, her collection of short fiction was named a finalist in the Keene Prize for Literature.

Paige H. Taggart lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. She graduated with her MFA in poetry at the New School after receiving her BA in Visual Studies from California College of the Arts. You can listen to her reading one of her poems online at *Weird Deer*. Her poems have appeared in the *Agriculture Reader*, *La Petite Zine*, *My Name Is Mud*, *Ditch Poetry*, *BlazeVOX* and *Critphoria*.

Josh Wallaert's work has appeared in *Black Warrior Review*, *Third Coast*, *New Orleans Review*, and *AGNI Online*, and he co-directed the documentary film *Arid Lands* (Sidelong Films, 2007). He blogs Noah Webster dictionary entries at websters.daily.blogspot.com.

Joshua Ware lives in Lincoln, Nebraska where he teaches writing and is pursuing his Ph.D. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in many journals, most recently *Anti-*, *Bat City Review*, *New American Writing*, *New Orleans Review*, *Sonora Review*, *Sleepingfish*, and *Word For/Word*.

Danielle Wheeler lives and works outside of Chicago with her Printmaker husband. She is currently assembling more Forest Stories.

Cori A. Winrock grew up on the wrong side of a Guinness Book lift-bridge. She was selected as editor's choice for Mid-American Review's 2006 James Wright Poetry Award and was also a finalist for The National Poetry Review's Annie Finch Prize. Her poems have appeared in (or are waiting in the wings of) *Pool*, *Shenandoah*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Diagram* and others. She is a recent graduate of Cornell University's MFA program.

Mande Zecca received her bachelor's degree in English from Wesleyan University, with an "almost-second major" in visual art. She currently lives in Iowa City and is a very recent graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop. She has work forthcoming in *Ploughshares*.

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caput



fig. 6